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Adventure

March 15th

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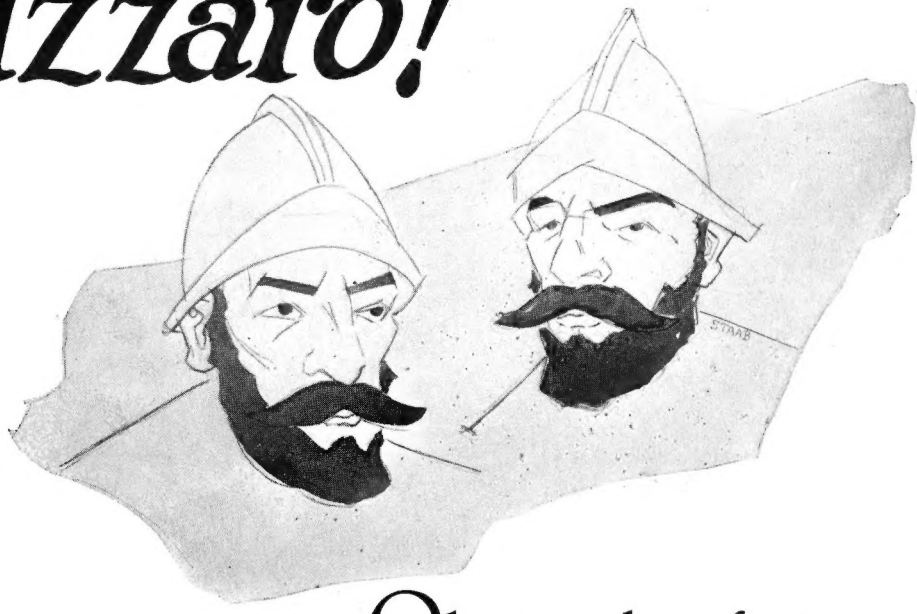

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1927

VOL. LXII. NO. 1

Adventure

(Registered U. S. Patent Office)

Issue of March 15

ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN, *Editor*

Contents:

Three Thieves, *A Short Story*	CHARLES GILSON	2
Airways, *A Short Story*	ANDREW A. CAFFREY	13
Board and Lodging	JOHN WEBB	27
Old Hart's Guns, *A Complete Novelette* . .	HUGH PENDEXTER	28
*The Strange Adventure of Tommy Lawn, *A Short Story*	ALBERT RICHARD WETJEN	52
El Peladito, *A Short Story*	H. H. DUNN	68
An History of Mr. Philip Ashton . . .	J. F. FRENCH	72
An Indian Ocean Mystery	N. TOURNEUR	97
Cockades, *A Three-Part Story. Part I* . . .	MEADE MINNIGERODE	98
Sam Dreben Felt Safe	MEIGS O. FROST	131
Company for the Night, *A Short Story* . .	BARRY SCOBEE	133
Hunting With the Nomads of Northern Patagonia	EDGAR YOUNG	154
Smoky Seas, *A Three-Part Story. Part II* . .	CLEMENTS RIPLEY	157

ADVENTURES IN THE MAKING

Advice and Reports on Outdoor Activities

The Camp-Fire	190	Ask Adventure	197
Straight Goods	205	Old Songs That Men Have Sung	204
Adventure's Travel Association	204	Books You Can Believe . . .	207
Lost Trails	206	Trail Ahead	208

Decorations by ROCKWELL KENT

**Occasionally one of our stories will be called an "Off-the-Trail" story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of magazines, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved.*

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The quest of a Chinese token

Three Thieves

By CHARLES GILSON

THERE are three great rivers in China: the Si-kiang, which is a prosperous river; the Yangtse-kiang, which is a sacred river; and the Hwang-ho, that some call the Hoang-ho, which is a devilish river, and with which this story is concerned.

The city of Kweifong on the Hwang-ho is little known because few white men go there, and there is no reason why they should. And yet in this place not many years ago there lived a distinguished man, a Dr. Arthur Hungerford, the author of the one standard history of the Chinese peoples that has been written in the English language.

In Kweifong Dr. Hungerford had converted a Chinese *yamen*, or official residence, into quite a habitable house, in which there was not a room that was not crammed with books, for he sat reading or writing many hours a day and often into the small hours of the morning.

The root of the trouble of which we have to tell—and trouble there certainly was—lay in the fact that at one time Dr. Hungerford was deputed by the authorities of an American Museum to purchase such curiosities and ancient relics as he thought might be of value. With which preamble we now proceed to relate the story of the Tsin seal and three outrageous rogues.

We find upon a certain evening Dr. Hungerford in his study, turning over the pages of an ancient Chinese book. This book was three hundred years old and therefore valuable. It was most wonderfully illustrated with hand-painted pictures upon rice-paper. It was a precious book in every sense.

The doctor turned the pages tenderly, with almost loving care. And, on a sudden, he came upon a picture of the Tsin seal itself. It may be added that the "First Universal Emperor" of the Tsin Dynasty ruled in China two thousand years ago.

It was a seal of green jade in the shape of a tortoise, very quaintly and wonderfully fashioned. It was covered with obsolete Chinese writing, by means of which it had been identified. The picture in the old Chinese book represented the seal exactly as it was, or had been.

As Dr. Hungerford regarded the picture he followed a definite train of thought. The picture had been painted so carefully and with such an eye to detail that the artist could have drawn it only from the original seal. There could be no doubt as to that, and hence it necessarily followed that the seal itself was in existence when the book was made—in other words, three hundred years ago.

Dr. Hungerford weighed the matter in his mind. If the seal had not been lost during seventeen hundred years it must have been in some place of security, and it was probably still in the same place.

The doctor rose to his feet. He had

"*Three Thieves*," *copyright*, 1927, *by Charles Gilson.*

an idea—what seemed to him a brilliant idea. What if he could gain possession of the seal itself?

Why not? Money, as he very well knew, can procure most things in China, and he had money enough at his disposal. He thought that he had obtained something very rare and curious in the old book with its beautiful illustrations upon rice-paper; but such an object was a mere bagatelle when compared to the seal of a monarch who had reigned long before the Christian era.

He decided at once that he would do what he could, and bethought him of Yuan-shi-wen.

Yuan-shi-wen was a Tatar merchant who was fat, learned, prosperous and a rogue. He dealt in all kinds of merchandise from furs and raw hides and grease to porcelain ornaments and trinkets in jade and ivory. He was also a pawnbroker.

It was the hour of the day when Dr. Hungerford usually went abroad upon the river in his launch. He therefore decided to go down-stream to the lower part of the town where lived Yuan-shi-wen, in a quaint ramshackle building, with a balcony that overhung the river.

He found the Tatar at home, seated in his office at the back of his storeroom. When the doctor entered Yuan-shi-wen rose to his feet, shook hands with himself and smiled, sucking his teeth. The usual salutations passed and then they seated themselves and got to business.

Yuan-shi-wen, who was a clean-shaven, oily-looking Chinaman, said that he would do what he could to assist the doctor. But he must first see the picture of the seal.

Accordingly, after they had drunk green tea they departed together in the doctor's launch. And when Yuan-shi-wen was shown the picture of the Tsin seal in the old Chinese book, he asked a question very much to the point.

"If I can get this thing," said he, "how many pieces will you pay?" By "pieces," of course, he meant dollars.

"If I can prove it to be genuine," said the doctor, "I will pay four thousand pieces."

Yuan-shi-wen had very little eyes, almond-shaped eyes that were pig-like and cunning. Yet when he heard mention of so large a sum he opened these eyes of his so wide that they were almond-shaped no longer.

"Very well," said he.

And with that, fanning himself, for the night was hot, he walked out of the house.

As he wended his way home that evening through the narrow streets of Kweifong Yuan-shi-wen was very pleased with himself, since he saw a chance of making a fortune. He knew very well that the Tsin seal was in a certain Taoist temple called the Blue Temple, situated in a mountainous district in the south of the province of Shansi.

In this temple resided a colony of Taoist priests. It was surrounded by a high wall in which there was but one gate, though no man might enter who was not himself of the Taoist brotherhood.

That did not trouble Yuan-shi-wen in the least. Early the following morning he departed from Kweifong upon a mule, and all day journeyed northward upon the banks of the Grand Canal to the city of Wei-hei-wei, where he talked with a certain Taoist priest of the name of Yang-wu.

The interview took place at sundown in a joss-house that was swarming with rats, where there were images of many strange gods, most of whom were hideous to behold and all of whom were in need of repair. And Yuan-shi-wen and Yang-wu sat cross-legged upon the ground smoking their opium-pipes.

"Doubtless you know the Blue Temple in the Tcin-ling Mountains?" Yuan-shi-wen asked.

"I know it well," said Yang-wu. "I have a brother there."

"That is good," said Yuan-shi-wen, extinguishing his opium-pipe with one long delicious puff. "That is indeed good, Yang-wu! I have heard it said that in that temple there is a certain worthless green jade seal—very ancient, of course,

and therefore of some merit, but of no value."

"And what of it?" asked the other, regarding Yuan-shi-wen through the enormous tortoise-shell spectacles that he was wearing.

He was a peculiar looking man, this Taoist priest. His head was shaven to the skull; he had a gray goat's beard and an ugly red scar upon his left cheek extending from the point of his ear to the corner of his mouth. The rims of his tortoise-shell spectacles were so large that they hid like a mask the greater part of his face.

"I desire this seal," said Yuan-shi-wen, "though it be worthless."

"Though it be worthless," repeated Yang-wu. "And what do you want it for?"

"That is my affair," said the other.

"What will you pay for it?" asked Yang-wu.

The merchant laughed.

"Now we talk sense," said he. "My worthy friend, if you bring me this worthless jade seal I will give you—four hundred dollars."

We perceive now that Yuan-shi-wen had excellent business capacities. He was proposing to buy for four hundred dollars what he knew he could sell for four thousand!

But Yang-wu was also no fool. He was a Honanese and therefore astute—as Yuan-shi-wen was a Tatar and therefore a scoundrel.

"If I obtain possession of this seal," said Yang-wu, "and deliver it into your hands, most honorable Yuan-shi-wen, I shall require a thousand dollars."

And so they argued and haggled as Orientals do until it was agreed between them that Yang-wu should procure the seal for the Tatar merchant for six hundred Chinese dollars.

And thereupon Yuan-shi-wen left the joss-house and, mounting upon his mule, set forward upon his return journey to the city of Kweifong. And Yang-wu, left to his thoughts, came to the conclusion that he had struck the bargain of his life.

Thinking he was alone, he chuckled. And as he chuckled a hand was laid quite gently upon one of his shoulders.

He turned quickly and beheld a man whom to the best of his belief he had never seen before. Like Yang-wu he was an old man, of about the same height, also with a gray goat's beard and also very thin.

"Who are you?" demanded Yang-wu.

"My name is Tung-li," said the other, smiling.

"And who is Tung-li?"

"By trade," said the other, "I am a pirate. I have lived all my life upon the rivers. I am also a grandfather."

Had anything of Yang-wu's face been visible he might have appeared annoyed. He did not seem at all pleased to see Tung-li.

"And what right have you here?" he asked.

Tung-li smiled more pleasantly than ever.

"I always consider it advisable," he observed, "to be honest in business transactions. I will tell you the truth. I know Yuan-shi-wen well both by sight and by repute. I know him to be very rich and I am well aware that he is too fat and comfortable to undertake so long a journey as this unless there is something to be made out of it."

Yang-wu gasped. He began to see what was in the wind. Tung-li continued in the same smooth, cheerful voice.

"I therefore followed Yuan-shi-wen to this joss-house," he went on. "I entered unseen by the door. Hiding behind the idol yonder, I was able to hear every word that passed between you."

At that Yang-wu lost his temper. He shook his hands in the air. He stamped upon the ground.

"Leave this place," he cried. "Be off!" He used epithets not translatable.

But Tung-li did not move. He stood with his hands folded in the long sleeves of his coat. There was no expression on his face.

"When we have settled our business," said he, quite calmly. "You are to receive I understand, six hundred dollars.

That is quite right. I agree to that. Three hundred dollars for you—and three hundred dollars for me."

Yang-wu made a noise like water bubbling out of a bottle.

Tung-li was imperturbable. He was neither excited nor angry.

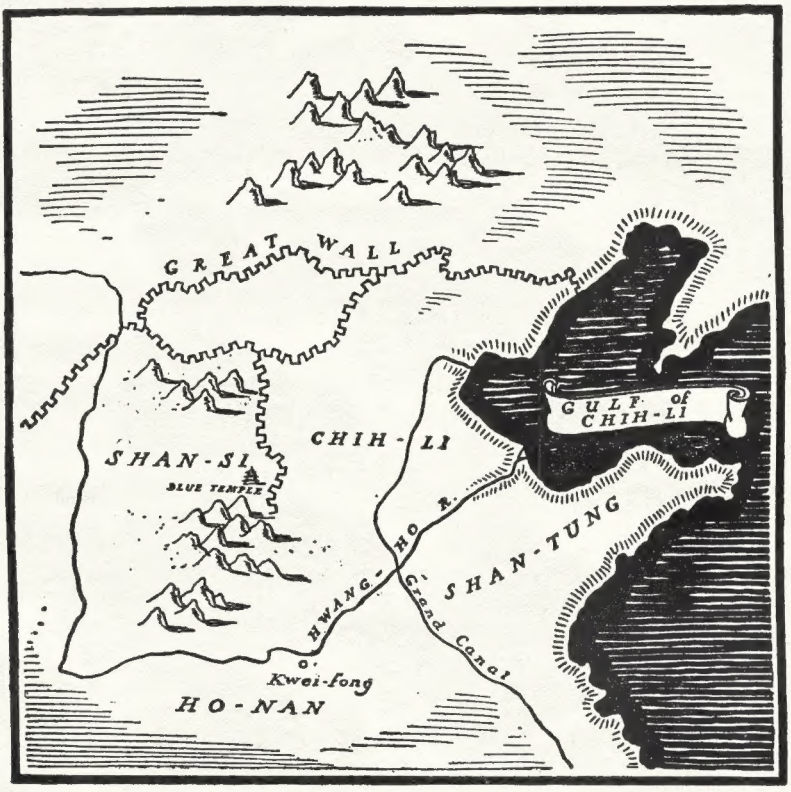
"It is not a long journey from here to the Blue Temple," said he. "If I warn the priests that you are coming you will certainly get nothing at all."

Yang-wu adjusted his tortoise-shell spectacles upon his nose. A full minute elapsed before he answered. He was cornered and he knew it.

"I bow to destiny," he observed. "He is a wise man who asks for rice, and accepts millet. I agree."

"But a moment since," remarked Tung-li, "we met as strangers. We part as brothers. With joy shall we meet again."

And Tung-li, as Yuan-shi-wen had done, went his way into the darkness, to his pirate junk that lay at anchor in the Grand Canal. And when the wind was favorable, he sailed to the city of Kwei-fong, when he made a strange purchase for a man whose eyesight was uncommonly good; he bought for himself a pair of enormous tortoise-shell spectacles, similar in every respect to those that Yang-wu had worn.



THE journey of Yang-wu to the Taoist Blue Temple in the Tcin-ling Mountains was monotonous and uneventful. He walked upon the narrow paths that separate the rice-fields, where there is room for a pack-animal or a wheelbarrow but not for a four-wheeled Peking cart.

He was many days upon the journey, first, because he was an old man and walked leaning upon a long staff, and

secondly, because a Chinese is never in a hurry. But eventually he arrived at the temple, knocked upon the outer door and informed the janitor that he had come upon a visit to his brother.

As a Taoist, he was permitted to enter. And he remained within the monastery for a week, attending strange religious ceremonies that necessitated the letting off of many firecrackers, gambling with the monks, to whom he was content to lose a little money and drinking *sam-shu*.

Allowed to go where he wanted, he soon learned his way about. And many had come to think that he intended to remain there permanently, when one morning it was discovered that he had gone.

Yang-wu had departed in the night, taking with him the Tsin seal, which he had found in a certain devil-temple.

Nobody missed it. Few of the monks knew of its existence, for Yang-wu had found it in a dusty drawer in a cabinet, and those who had seen it never suspected for a moment that the thing was worth anything. Otherwise, it would never have remained in that place for hundreds of years.

Yang-wu set forth upon his return journey with mingled feelings in regard to the future. He had obtained the seal; he had accomplished the object of his journey. But it yet remained for him to devise a method by which he could swindle Tung-li.

The night was warm. The moon was full—a round, pale China moon in a starry sky. The *fou* was blowing, the hot damp wind of summer-time in Northern China.

Yang-wu came to a grove of almond trees and decided that he would sit down and rest his weary legs. Preferring opium to either food or sleep, he produced his opium-pipe, his little oil lamp and a small bowl of a substance that resembled treacle.

Very carefully he rolled an opium pill, and while he was thus employed he temporarily departed from this world of sentient human beings. In other words, he received from behind such a blow on the crown of his shaven head that he immediately became unconscious.

For hours he lay quite motionless on the ground. The moon went down over the Great Wall of China, beyond which lies the vast wilderness where the wild sheep roam. The stars dwindled, one by one, and vanished; and the eastern sky-line became streaked with steel-blue, purple and silver. And still Yang-wu was unconscious.

When the sun was risen, he sat up, blinking, and held both hands to his aching, throbbing head.

Some moments elapsed before he remembered where he was, and even then he could not in any way account for what had happened to him. Quite suddenly he remembered the seal.

He patted his pockets, he turned them inside out. He examined the long sleeves of his coat. He searched everywhere upon the ground.

There was his opium-pipe of carved ivory, and the bowl of opium and the little lamp. But the seal was gone.

He arose to his feet, and was attacked by *chi*. *Chi* is Chinese madness begotten of wrath, disappointment, indignation and disgust. He cursed and blasphemed in the Three Religions. He beat himself upon the chest, he spat upon the ground, he danced like a maniac, he shook his fist at the sun.

Then at last he collapsed upon the ground. He lay panting like a man at the end of a long race. His tongue hung from his mouth and there was foam upon his lips.

He had dreamed of six hundred dollars. He had been forced to consent to accept three hundred. He who asks for rice should be content with millet. But now —by the Temple of Heaven itself!—he would get nothing at all!

IN THE meantime Tung-li, the pirate, was hastening toward the city of Kweifong.

Though he was a man of about the same age as Yang-wu, he walked much more quickly, for he was stronger, being a pirate while the other was a priest who did nothing but gamble and beg.

Tung-li was on the whole well pleased with himself. He had followed Yang-wu to the Blue Temple, he had seen him depart and had followed him to the grove of almond trees.

He had probably killed him. But that did not trouble Tung-li. He had killed one or two others in his life. He had the Tsin seal in his possession.

He had decided to disguise himself as Yang-wu. They were not unlike each other. Tung-li had but to shave his head, to don the robe of a Taoist priest, to paint a red scar upon his left cheek and to wear the tortoise-shell spectacles that he had already bought to be taken for Yang-wu himself.

He intended to visit Yuan-shi-wen in the city of Kweifong, where he would receive six hundred dollars. If he were clever he might even be able to obtain a little more.

Early one afternoon he arrived at Kweifong, where he took lodgings at a certain inn after he had purchased some red paint, the robe of a Taoist priest and other sundries, including a Chinese razor, which is not unlike a Dutch hoe without a handle.

In the inn he shaved his head, painted a red scar upon his left cheek, donned his tortoise-shell spectacles and his priestly robe. Then he looked at himself in a mirror.

"I am Yang-wu," said he. And he laughed.

He went out that night, and drank *sam-shu* in a restaurant, where he ate sharks' fins and larks' tongues, luxuries that as a rule he couldn't afford. Then he departed full of confidence to the residence of Yuan-shi-wen, the Tatar merchant.

The Tatar's shop was closed for the night. The shutters were up. The narrow, gaily painted signboards swung and creaked in the *fou*. Tung-li knocked loudly on the door.

A face appeared at a window, a face that was fat and round as the moon, a cheerful, crafty face.

"Who's there?" asked a voice.

"I am Yang-wu," said Tung-li. "I have journeyed from afar. I have brought that which you require."

From somewhere in the house a dog began to bark the rasping persistent barking of a Chow dog.

"Wait," said Yuan-shi-wen. "I will come down and let you in."

A moment after the door was unbolted and unlocked and Yuan-shi-wen appeared in the moonlight in the narrow street. The Chow dog growled at his heels.

"Welcome, Yang-wu," said he, and then in a whisper, "You have the seal?"

"I have the seal," said Tung-li.

He was by nature somewhat straighter in the back than Yang-wu. So he was careful to stand with rounded shoulders rubbing his hands together as he had seen the priest do.

"Let us go upstairs," said the merchant. "Up there we can talk in comfort. There is no one in the house."

He led the way up a narrow rickety staircase into a small room illumined by an oil lamp, where there was an open door which gave upon the balcony that overlooked the river. The floor of this room was of matting, upon one of the walls hung a scarlet embroidered curtain, and in the center was a small blackwood table not more than ten inches high. Upon this table were a tea-pot and tea-cups and several small china bowls containing rice and chopped-up meat and fish.

Yuan-shi-wen waved a hand toward the table.

"Pray seat yourself, Yang-wu," said he. "You have arrived at the very moment when I was about to sit down to my miserable and disgusting supper. But I have some very excellent tea that you must taste, tea from Japan."

They were Chinese. The whole night was before them. The one was the host; the other, the guest. It was not in the nature of things that they should yet mention the subject that was in the minds of both.

Yuan-shi-wen made tea; and Tung-li

watched him. And it was well for him he did.

Yuan-shi-wen took a tea-cup in his left hand, the tea-pot in his right, and filled the cup to the brim. It was pale green, lukewarm tea.

Tung-li took the proffered cup, raised it to his lips, but drank no drop.

"Most worthy host," said he, "I see that your courtesy demands that I should drink before you. I can think of no better way to prove my unworthiness than this."

He was seated cross-legged upon the ground at the little blackwood table. The Chow dog was at his elbow. He had patted it once or twice. He took a piece of meat from one of the china bowls, dipped this in his tea and gave it to the dog.

With one gulp the Chow dog swallowed it. Yuan-shi-wen came out with a sound that was half gasp, half groan. The dog gave a growl, twisted himself with a kind of jerk, and then lay stiff and dead.

Tung-li was on his feet in an instant.

"Was this part of our bargain?" he cried.

He had lifted his robe. The blade of a knife flashed in the lamplight. Yuan-shi-wen, fat though he was, had hastened into a corner where he stood panting with his back to the wall.

"You shall pay for this!" growled Tung-li the pirate. "And when I leave this place, I go with more than six hundred dollars."

He had a knife in his hand. With his shaven head and his great tortoise-shell spectacles and the red scar upon his cheek he was not pleasant to see.

Yuan-shi-wen was very frightened. He was fat and breathless, he was a merchant, a man of peace and, moreover, he was unarmed.

Fortunately for him the oil lamp was within his reach. He seized it swiftly and hurled it into the face of his opponent.

Tung-li had not expected this. The lamp was heavy, and the weight of it struck him between the eyes. The glass broke into fragments.

Tung-li lay half senseless on the ground. He was struggling to rise to his feet when Yuan-shi-wen picked up the blackwood table by its legs sending the tea-cups and the tea-pot flying with a crash of broken earthenware.

Blackwood is almost as heavy as iron. The Tatar lifted the table high above his head, and brought it down with all his force upon the skull of Tung-li, the pirate.

Tung-li moved no more. He lay with his jaw dropped, like a broken toy, and very horrible he looked with his head all cut and bleeding and the tortoise-shell spectacles still upon his nose.

Yuan-shi-wen, fat and out of breath, looked at him for an instant, as a dog might sniff at a dead rat. Then he bent down and felt Tung-li's heart. It was still. Tung-li was dead.

Yuan-shi-wen lifted the skirt of his long robe and mopped the perspiration from his brow.

Tung-li was dead. Yuan-shi-wen had killed him. He was considerably alarmed because he had never killed any one before.

He knelt down upon the floor and emptied Tung-li's pockets. He found a silver watch, a few dollars, a string of copper cash—and the Tsin seal.

He examined the seal in the light of the candle which he had lighted with a trembling hand. There did not seem to him. to be anything extraordinary about it. Still, if a foreign devil was content to pay four thousand dollars for a few ounces of green jade, the bigger fool he must be—and so much the better for Yuan-shi-wen, who put the seal into his pocket.

He got to his feet and stood stroking his chin, regarding the body of Tung-li, which he believed to be the body of Yang-wu, the Taoist priest.

Well, one priest the less, and the world was so much the better. Confucianists were talkative, Mohammedans were pugnacious, Buddhists were argumentative—but Taoists were vile. Yuan-shi-wen himself had no religion. His opinions were therefore unbiased.

He went out upon the balcony, and

considered the night. The moon was masked for the moment behind a bank of racing clouds. So far as he could see, there was no one about. There was no sound or movement on the river.

He lifted the body in his arms. Tung-li was not heavy.

He carried it out to the balcony. And then he dropped it into the river. It struck the surface with a splash and disappeared.

Yuan-shi-wen came back into the room, closed the window, seated himself cross-legged on the floor, lit a cigar and patted his dead Chow dog.

IN THE meantime we have left the real Yang-wu in a very agitated frame of mind, natural enough in one who had been hit on the head and robbed.

He had more than a shrewd suspicion as to who had attacked him; and therefore he hurried toward Kweifong, running a little distance as fast as he could and then stopping for breath. He would be even with Tung-li yet.

Very breathless and dirty, with a head that still ached and throbbed, he arrived at dead of night upon the north bank of the Hwang-ho a little below Kweifong.

It was a hot night. The *fou* was still blowing. There were clouds in the sky which from time to time masked the round full China moon.

Yang-wu sat down upon the bank of the river and drank of the muddy water, for he was thirsty.

He wanted to get across to the other side. Perhaps if he waited a boat would come along. He was quite willing to pay a few copper cash to be ferried across.

He waited for about an hour. Then he heard the sound of an oar.

Presently he saw a *sampan* in the moonlight. He could see the boatman standing up in the stern, swaying his body backward and forward, as he rocked his oar from side to side.

"Hullo there!" cried Yang-wu.

"Hai-hai!" sang the boatman. Sailors have much the same kind of language all over the world.

"Come here," cried the priest. "I will pay to be ferried across."

The boatman immediately turned his *sampan* toward the shore. He was a fisherman, and very poor, and quite apart from that because he was a Chinaman he never lost an opportunity of making money.

Where are you going?" he asked, when he had brought his *sampan* to within a few yards of the bank.

To Kweifong," said Yang-wu.

"Ah, Kweifong!" chimed the boatman. "A pleasant place. How much will you pay me?"

"Ten cash," said the priest.

The boatman obtained fifteen; and then, Yang-wu got the shock of his life.

The *sampan* man lit a paper Chinese lantern that was suspended from a bamboo pole in the bows of his boat. He did this in order that Yang-wu might step into the boat and not into the mud by the river bank. Yang-wu stepped into the boat and trod on a corpse.

He gave a yell and nearly jumped overboard. He tripped over the seat and came down in a sitting position in the stern with his legs cocked up in the air. And between those legs he beheld the corpse of himself—a man who was wearing very large tortoise-shell spectacles, who was dressed in the long robe of a Taoist priest, who had a red scar upon his left cheek, extending from his ear to the corner of his mouth. Yang-wu nearly fainted.

It took him the better part of five minutes to recover himself. And even then his teeth chattered in his head like castanets, his knees smote one against the other, and when he tried to talk he gibbered.

"What's that?" he got out at last, pointing to the thing in front of him.

"A dead man," said the boatman, quite casually, as if it were a matter of no import.

The boatman had not yet bothered to look at Yang-wu. He was not in the least concerned what kind of man Yang-wu was. The business of the moment was a question of fifteen copper cash.

But Yang-wu now rose to his feet and very unsteadily crawled along the *sampan* toward the bows. This brought him into the full light of the lantern, and the fisherman looked at him for the first time.

He dropped his oar. He shrieked. He collapsed. In the middle of the boat he went down upon his knees and implored Yang-wu to have mercy on him.

He had never done anything really wrong in his life. He had certainly often sold bad fish, but that was because he had a wife and children. It was also true that the scales he used in the course of his business were weighted, but that was also because he had a family to keep. On the other hand, he had always been particularly kind to a pet canary that he had owned for three years. Very often he had taken this canary out for walks in the evening, when the canary had been able to fly about with a long piece of silk tied to one of its legs so that he could pull it back again when he wanted to, like a kite. And because of this he hoped that the ghost of the drowned man would do him no bodily harm.

Yang-wu himself was beginning to believe that he was a ghost. He was beginning to wonder whether the violent blow he had received on the head had actually killed him. Had he been walking about for two or three days imagining himself to be still alive? To assure himself, he was obliged to feel his pulse, to pinch himself. Then he got to business.

"Where did you find my body?" he asked in as deep a voice as he could.

"Floating down the river," said the other, in so breathless a whisper that his words were scarcely audible.

The ghost began to turn out the dead man's pockets. But he could find nothing. So he took off the tortoise-shell spectacles, and got the second shock of his life.

He sat down upon the seat of the boat and held his aching head.

"This is all very strange!" said he. "Very strange indeed!"

He was trying to think. This dead man was Tung-li, who had undoubtedly stolen the Tsin seal. But he could not find the seal in any of Tung-li's pockets. The fisherman must have it!

The man was so frightened that Yang-wu knew he would speak the truth. He had stolen nothing, because there was nothing to steal.

On the other side of the river Yang-wu stepped upon the shore. He was very mystified, so mystified in fact that he forgot to pay the *sampan* man his fifteen copper cash, and the man forgot to ask for it.

Yang-wu stood on the bank biting his finger-nails.

"This is all very strange!" said he, for the fiftieth time.

When he reached Kweifong, though it was very late at night, there were several people abroad in the narrow streets. Yang-wu went into a restaurant, ordered some food and did some real solid thinking.

Then upon a sudden he snapped a finger and thumb. He had got it! He might have thought of it at first.

He paid his bill and went out of the restaurant. He found a rickshaw-coolie asleep in the street. He told the coolie to take him to the house of Yuan-shi-wen, the pawnbroker.

Yuan-shi-wen was still in the upper room, and he was still very perturbed and nervous, for as we have said he had never killed any one before. Consequently when he heard a knock on the door he nearly jumped out of his skin.

He was so alarmed that he dared not go down and open the front door. And then he remembered that he had probably left it open. Indeed he was certain that he had never locked it after he had admitted Tung-li, whom he had believed to be Yang-wu.

He heard a footstep upon the stairs. He shivered. Breathing heavily, he looked about him, and saw that he had no way of escape. Had he been able to swim he would have jumped into the river. But he could not swim, and therefore he was sure that he would be caught. He would be taken to the *yamen*, where they would cut off his head.

The door opened. Yuan-shi-wen was cold all over his body. There were great beads of perspiration upon the shaven fore part of his head. The door opened and there entered—Yang-wu!

Yuan-shi-wen looked like a waxwork. He stood perfectly stiff, rigid, with his eyes staring and his mouth wide open. He could not speak. He could not move.

But an hour or so before he had committed a murder. He had killed a man in this very room. And the ghost of that man was now before him!

It was the ghost who was the first to speak.

He was an honest ghost. He was a ghost who spoke true words in a deep voice, who spoke slowly and distinctly.

"I am the ghost of Yang-wu," said he.

Yuan-shi-wen groaned and went down upon his knees. Though he was actually very fat, for some reason or other he now looked quite thin.

"Mercy!" he cried.

"The Hwang-ho," said the ghost in an even deeper voice, "renders up the dead."

Yang-wu was very pleased with that. He had thought of it in the rickshaw.

The fat Tatar had nothing to say, and if he had, he couldn't have said it.

"Give me back the seal you stole from me," Yang-wu demanded.

Yuan-shi-wen fumbled in his pockets. With great difficulty he at last produced the Tsin seal, which was of green jade and fashioned in the shape of a tortoise, and delivered it into the hands of Yang-wu, the Taoist priest.

The ghost pocketed it. He was satisfied, but he hadn't finished with the Tatar yet.

"Pay attention," said he. "I have returned to earth from the spirit-dwellings of our ancestors. You murdered me for profit, to save yourself the sum we had agreed upon. I am dead and you are alive. Hence the arrangement that existed between us is null and void. That you will admit?"

Yuan-shi-wen was quite ready to admit anything. He was just capable of nodding his head.

"Why did you want the seal?" asked Yang-wu.

And Yuan-shi-wen, still upon his knees like one of the idols in the joss-house, told him the truth. When he mentioned four thousand dollars as the sum he was to receive the ghost came out with a kind of explosion. In fact, for the moment Yang-wu was so indignant that he almost forgot he was a ghost.

However, he mastered himself. He swallowed his wrath and walked in a very stately manner out of the room, down the stairs and into the street, where he laughed long and loudly. And he was still laughing when he got to the opium-house in which he intended to spend the night.

THE following morning, Dr. Hungerford was expecting a letter from his friend, Mr. Thackwell, the Oriental historian, to whom he had written about the Tsin seal. He had even sent Mr. Thackwell the old Chinese book in which there was a painting of the seal upon rice-paper.

The doctor was in his bedroom when there entered his Chinese "boy," or personal servant.

"Master," said the boy, "the letters have come. They are on the desk in the study. Also there is a man who wishes to see you, a Taoist priest."

Dr. Hungerford went downstairs, where he found Yang-wu.

"What do you want with me?" he asked, speaking in the Mandarin dialect and then repeating the question in Honanese, which Yang-wu understood.

Yang-wu again got straight to business.

"I have got the Tsin seal," said he. "Ten thousand dollars."

The doctor opened his study door. Yang-wu entered and seated himself upon a chair.

"This is somewhat surprizing," Dr. Hungerford observed. "Apart from the fact that I never intended to pay as much as that, might I ask who you are?"

Yang-wu folded his hands.

"My name is Tung-li," said he.

"And your business?"

"I am a pirate."

The doctor laughed.

"You do not look very dangerous," he observed. "However, what do you know about the Tsin seal?"

Yang-wu said nothing. He just produced the seal, and planked it down upon the doctor's desk. In his own way he was a bit of an actor.

The doctor was an antiquarian first and a human being afterward. He picked up the seal and examined it. He was greatly interested. He was even a little excited.

Then he regarded the question in a practical light. It was quite possible that this man had stolen the seal from Yuan-shi-wen, and in any case he asked an exorbitant price.

"How did you get hold of this?" he asked.

Yang-wu had a ready answer, which was half the truth.

"Yuan-shi-wen, who owes me much money, gave it to me," said he.

And then the door was opened and Yuan-shi-wen himself walked into the room.

Yang-wu glanced at him and did his best to look like a ghost. But to his utmost consternation Yuan-shi-wen did not seem to mind his presence in the least. He just took the chair the doctor offered him and sat with his fat hands on his knees, staring at Yang-wu.

"The very man to explain all this!" exclaimed the doctor. "Of course, you know Tung-li?"

"Tung-li!" exclaimed the Tatar, with ineffable scorn. "This man is not Tung-li. His name is Yang-wu. He is a Taoist priest and a fool."

For a moment, Yang-wu was very alarmed. Then he perceived, as he thought, an outlet of escape. He turned to Yuan-shi-wen.

"What do you know of Tung-li?" he asked.

"Know of him," cried the other. "Why, I killed him."

"Killed him!" exclaimed Dr. Hungerford.

"Yes," said Yuan-shi-wen. "And when I have settled with this fool-pig I go to the *yamen* and claim thirty dollars payment for having killed a pirate."

Yang-wu opened his eyes very wide.

"You killed Tung-li!" he exclaimed.

"His body has been picked up on the river," said Yuan-shi-wen, "and I have seen it."

And then they began to argue. To whom did the seal belong? It would not have been a difficult question to settle in a civilized court of law, but these two Chinese thought fit to shriek and swear and shout at each other, the one declaring that he had given the seal to no living man, the other contending that no dead man is capable of conducting his own affairs.

Dr. Hungerford was sick to death of it all, as well as nearly deafened, long before they agreed to split the profits. And by then he had opened and read his letters, including the one from Mr. Thackwell.

"Four thousand dollars," said Yuan-shi-wen.

But the doctor shook his head.

"I'm afraid the bargain is off," said he. "I stipulated, you will recollect, that the seal must be genuine. This is a very clever forgery that was made by a Taoist priest at the beginning of the last century. The real seal is in Peking."

The two Chinamen stared at each other. They had nothing to say.

They went out together like a pair of funeral mutes, and sold the seal for a string of cash, which in that particular neighborhood and at that particular time, was worth in American money exactly forty cents.

And that was all they got, for when Yuan-shi-wen went to the *yamen* to claim his thirty dollars every one laughed at him. For the fat Tatar was well known in the city of Kweifong and, as there was no proof, neither the Prefect nor any one else would believe that he could ever have slain a pirate.

Of a pilot and his curious cargo

By ANDREW A. CAFFREY

Airways

AIR-MAIL pilot Rutter, sprawled belly-down on the flying-office floor, was engrossed in the busy business of crowding a litter of very young kittens through a small hole and into the darkness beneath the mud-silled temporary shack. The balls of fur, weary of the game, clawed and resisted. Otto, the high-powered mammy of that brave litter, posed in resigned watchfulness a few feet removed. We called her Otto because Super of Air-mail Googan had named the cat Otto before there was any definite proof as to just what kind of cat Otto might be. Now, hearing her called Otto, our super—well, our super seemed not to hear, but colored as one does who resents being kidded.

As Rutter sent each youngster into the nether darkness he did so with some such expression as, "Come back a winner, baby!" "My jack's on the second hole—be with me!" "Don't fail your daddy, cat! Remember—old sport Rutter is betting on you."

You see, it was an old army game in a new way. Pilot Miller and half a dozen hangers-on about the flying field were bucking Rutter's game. Cats-As-Cats-Come the game was called.

Cats-As-Cats-Come was played this way: Beside the hole through which Rutter crowded the kittens were four other unused pipe openings. These openings had been bored for three-inch pipes; therefore, they were just kitten-size. When all the pawns had been forced below, all five holes were covered. Then the gang stamped noisily upon the floor; this by way of confusing and stirring the benighted kittens to greater efforts and more rapid action. This done, all bellied-down once more and placed their bets. If your money was opposite the hole through which the first kitten should scramble—once the covering board should be removed—you won. But if Rutter's Black Jack—the only all-jet ace in the litter—should be the first one to make the grade you paid him double. Rutter could also bank on the other holes. He owned the game. Otto was his. The nut was sitting very pretty.

"I think I'll give up flying air-mail,"

he often said. "This here Cats-As-Cats-Come is the greatest thing since the Bostonians lost faith in Charlie Ponzi."

Super Googan, eating a dead cigar behind his desk, looked on in anger and talked to himself. The kiddish noise and unbusinesslike despoiling of his office was hard to take. But a flying office, any flying office, is just a free-and-easy hang-out; and all the Googans on earth will never change the status thereof. The hangers-on Mr. Googan might have given the bum's rush, but Rutter and Miller—no. These two were dynamite. They spoke English. And when they spoke it to the super, the super fell by the roadside.

Every now and then, pacing to the Pacific-side windows, the super would ask:

"Rutter, can't you get under way? This fog doesn't look so bad now—you've flown in worse stuff."

To which pilot Rutter would reply:

"Four bits on the second hole. And do your stuff, Black Jack! Be with your daddy, nigger baby!"

That's how things stood. Rutter was an hour overdue in his flying take-off with the east-bound mail. The day when Mr. Googan could send a pilot out into any kind of sky—to die—had passed; at least as far as such pilots as Rutter and Miller were concerned. They chose their own flying weather. When there was any kind of visibility, they flew. But when the sky was right down on the hills, they kept one foot on the ground and, therefore, the other out of the grave.

But Mr. Googan could never quite understand how closely associated flying and dying are. He would persist—

"Come, Rutter; the mail must go!"

That slogan—The Mail Must Go!—had filled more than twenty graves in the first eighteen months of air-mail. Now, to use it on a pilot was like asking an M. P. who won the war.

"Get your bets down, men," was Rutter's reply. "Are you set? Away go the galloping mastodons—come on, Black Jack!"

"Rutter—" the super was getting hot—"your judgment is rotten."

"So's your old management, Mr. Googan! My judgment, rotten or otherwise, has kept me alive. When the fog is like this, Super, I say, 'No-No-Not-yet.' Heaven, you know, is overstocked with your flying yes-men."

Rutter had carried on this digression between plays, while shuffling the pawing, sprawling kittens. Now, after paddling each little round butt, he had sent them below with full instructions as to the expected luck.

"Gentlemen, or otherwise, lay your bets."

In the meantime, while Mr. Googan strove to think up a come-back for Rutter's hard facts, a taxi had whirled up before the door. The super, always hair-trigger with the glad hand, forgot Rutter and fell in on a company front of one, tickled pink to do the honors as our reception committee. Then the super had an awful set-back; the newcomer wasn't anybody at all—just old "Dad" Hayes.

"Otto," Rutter asked, looking over his shoulder, "did you bring that in? Hello, Dad, old ——! What you doing here?"

Dad Hayes was one of these men of mystery. Whenever a stranger, a lounger or loafer is found, apparently without assignment, at a Government establishment the word quickly travels that the questionable one is a Secret Service agent, a Postal Inspector or Intelligence Department man. The old-world belief in fairies and goblins at least requires an imagination of some sort; this suspicion that every stranger may be a sleuth is silly.

In the air-mail service, all newcomers to a field stand convicted, and every newly appointed pilot and mechanic is held guilty, until time establishes their true status beyond the traditional shadow of doubts. Dad Hayes was no exception to the indiscriminate rule. He appeared to have no conceivable connection whatsoever with this service, yet spent much time at the several fields. So, to a man, the gang dubbed him "dick." But in

Dad's case the suspicion didn't go to waste. I happened to be in a position to know. And Rutter—perhaps Miller—also knew that the old man carried lots of authority.

During the war, in the uniform of an air service officer, I had, for some several weeks, worked under Dad Hayes as an agent for the Intelligence Department. For a long time the Army flying fields and civilian air-craft factories of Long Island gave us plenty to watch and worry over. After the Armistice I was transferred to Washington and shortly, because of the Army reduction, let out of both branches of service.

"Want to win a little easy money, Dad?" Rutter asked.

"Big-hearted Rutter!" Miller mused. "He must have been a Y-worker during the war. Always giving something away!"

Rutter explained the game to Dad. Outside, and down the bay, the fog was beginning to lift. Rutter proposed making it the last play.

"Better come in on this, boss," he said, turning to Googan.

"I think I will take you down the line," the super decided. He dropped a twenty on the floor. "When you pay on that, Cocky, there'll be tears in your eyes."

"Yes," Rutter agreed. "And when little old Black Jack does his stuff and you pay me double, Mr. Googan, there'll be an ache in your heart beyond condolence. Super, this is the biggest minute of your life. The first chance you've ever taken."

Googan did appear nervous.

There was fifty of Rutter's money on one of the end holes. That hole, he said, was going to be Black Jack's golden gate of triumphant entry. Then he exhorted Black Jack not to lie down on him, told him which hole to come through, promised catnip and fat mice when he grew up. Also, he threatened that Black Jack wouldn't grow up unless he came in a winner. The rest of the money on that floor was more than a month's wages for any man in the room. So they stamped on the floor, used their own private evocations, and told Rutter to uncover.

"The bustling brutes are on their way," he shouted. "Stand back, you slaves of Lady Luck, and give Black Jack lots of air."

But Black Jack wasn't looking for air. The usual meowing ensued, plus the customary baby scratching and scramble. Five kittens made their precipitate appearance and rushed for the lunch counter where Otto—who wasn't that kind of cat at all—in welcome checked them in. Then Otto, with a half-smile, on her face, looked at Rutter, then at all five of the holes. Rutter studied those holes, too. Black Jack failed to show.

When Rutter finished paying it was with I. O. U's.

"Black Jack," he avowed, "this is going to cost you at least nine of your allotted lives. I've been so good to you, then you do me dirt like this."

For a few minutes he meowed and tried to induce the missing kitten to come up for air.

"Poor little devil," he finally said, "I've worked him to death in the dark; just like Mr. Googan asking his pilots to fly in the fog. I sure don't deserve any luck!"

Otto, still laughing at Rutter, watched the latter's efforts toward retrieving the strayed. Miller, starting at the far end of the office, was tramping toward Rutter in an attempt to help. Dad Hayes and Googan were deep in conversation at the super's desk. The hangers-on had drifted through the door.

Googan called me to his desk.

"Mr. Hayes," he said, "wants to be flown to Salt Lake City. It's official business. You pilot him. When can you leave?"

The fog was on the blow. Here and there large patches of blue sky gave bright promise. A hop to the Lake, more or less free-lance, looked good to me.

"I can hop off as soon as the boys roll out a plane. I'm set."

"That's more like it!" The super turned to Rutter. "Come on, Rutter,

step on it. Get into the air with that mail."

"Got to find Black Jack," Rutter answered. "Otto, you old tramp, what are you going to do about this?"

Otto made no move.

"Cats are sure dumb," Rutter swore. "Let Pig come in."

I opened the door and called Pig. Pig was one of those wise-looking, underslung Scotch mutts. He had about an inch of road clearance and, in spots, the hair was worn from his tummy where high places had obstructed his way. He moved slowly, when at all, and showed little interest in life.

Rutter had pried up a floor board.

"Pig, you low-down Scot, get down there and find one cat."

Pig didn't like the idea of work, but when booted lightly he went slowly.

Even Pig found the going hard but, grunting and growling, he worked forward under the joists. A minute later, Black Jack came out fast, slipped through Rutter's hands, and made for Otto. Then Pig was hard to find.

"Rutter, you're delaying the mails." Mr. Googan now had a very legitimate squawk. "Your plane is on the line. Take off—and now!"

"Got to find Pig—hey, Pig! What has this mutt got here!"

Pig, laboriously dragging something, had worked his way back to Rutter. We watched Rutter reach down and drag out a musette bag. He tossed it on the floor.

"Vale's bag," the clerk volunteered.

Miller, while Rutter replaced the floor board, opened the bag. A cargo of almost-fresh mackerel slithered out on to the desk.

"Now what in —— is that jay-bird doing with fish?" asked Miller.

"That's nothing," the clerk went on to explain. "On every trip, over the hump, Vale takes some mackerel to a friend in Reno."

The clerk, whose duty it was to check the mail pouches, was in a position to know.

"A Chink fisherman brings them in every other night and leaves them with the watchman. Vale slips them under the floor in his locker to keep them cool."

"They haven't been cleaned yet, not gutted," Rutter noticed. "A —— of a way to ship fish, I'll say!"

"Not so good," Dad Hayes agreed as he studied one of them. "And not so bad." He replaced the fish in the bag. "Put 'em back in the locker. Let's get going," he added, turning to me.

"Who's this Vale?" Dad asked as we started for the hangar. "Do I know him? One of the old gang?"

"No—" the hangar crew was pushing our plane to the starting line—"Vale claims to have flown with the English. Googan thinks he's a regular little tin god.

"Today was Vale's turn to fly the eastbound trip but, early this morning, before the fog settled down, he left on some sort of a private flight to Los Angeles. Googan's making Rutter fill in on the hop. This bird Vale has the softest graft in air-mail, makes lots of these side trips."

"Oh, he do, does he?" mused Dad. "And does he always carry fish?"

The old man was wearing an expression that I had seen before. He watched the field crew's operations and smiled.

"What's the laugh?" I asked. "What about Vale's fish?"

"Are they just fish to you?" he queried. "Reno is lousy with good mountain trout; can you imagine anybody up there wanting punk mackerel?"

The connection was beyond me. I said so.

"Well, Mac," he said, "you used to be a pretty good guesser. I'm not going to contribute to your dumbness now. Between here and the Lake, you'll have some six or seven dull flying-hours of thought. Just think hard on fish all the way. Remember I'm on business. Perhaps the fish business. If you can't find your way out, I might give you a hint or two when we arrive. Maybe I'll use you and the plane before I'm through."

TAKING off, I gave Rutter a few minutes' lead. The sky, in places, was still heavy. I had no desire to fly anywhere near Rutter. For, whenever the chance for flying company offered, he was wont to come in close and lap wings. He was that kind of a nut; nothing would cure him.

Once in the air, the clouds took him. His motor droned out across the bay, and he was gone.

For the first hour, Dad and I followed the east bay shore and the Sacramento River. With these marks by which to fly there was little cause for anxiety. But the fog, tulle-like fog now, went all the way. Out ahead, the foothills of the Sierras stood above the green-gray bank, and beyond them, less than an hour's flight, now, were the high places and Reno. Reno would be our first stop for gasoline.

Just as we got in over the rough going, the clouds and fog gave way, the sun burned through, and two wanderers over this great earth were happy. Then that happiness ended. A shadow crawled across my wings. I knew who it was. Looking up, a few yards above, we saw Rutter.

Hanging over the side of his cockpit, he waved a greeting. That bird was just about as welcome as a frost in July. Right then, I knew that I was going to catch —— all the way to Reno.

True to form, Rutter started his monkey business. Flying directly above our plane, he throttled his motor. Settled—settled—settled. And my heart sickened — sickened — sickened. For a minute Dad watched him; then shook his head, and looked away. The old man had been around aviation long enough to appreciate the danger. He was finding no fun in this.

Now, an airman hates to go down. It's defeat to be crowded toward the ground. When you lose altitude and give way, you've been called. Called. Even if you were not playing. So I tried to keep a stiff upper lip. Tried not to mind. And the space between whirling, flashing propellers lessened and lessened. Then when the compressed air behind my blades whirled and eddied with that thrown back by Rutter's, I gave way. But I had been losing altitude all the time and never knew it.

My right lower wing grazed a tree on a mountain side. Dad Hayes recoiled into the mail-pit. I went cold. That half-baked nut, thinking that I was watching my altitude, had nearly driven me into the ground. Rutter—Rutter will kill some one pretty soon. Then, like the others, he'll know enough to quit. But it will be too late. And he'll go through life waking up during the night with a start—and remembering.

When I had fought my way out of that mountain pass and gained a safe altitude again, I was seeing red. I thought of going after Rutter, thought of "riding" his tail and calling him. Then, cooling down a little, I thought better of it; I couldn't call Rutter.

For the rest of the way into Reno he kept his distance. Now and then he came in close enough to thumb his nose and laugh.

Once on the ground at Reno, I saw to it that I had no contact with Rutter. Thirty minutes after landing, our plane had been serviced and we were ready to take off for the next station, Elko.

And then Rutter sought us out. He was overjoyed. Mr. Googan, perhaps to be free of Rutter as long as possible, had wired a new order into Reno after our departure from the Coast.

"I'm going through to the Lake with you," he said. "There's an extra plane there to be ferried back to the Coast. Shove over in that mail-pit, Dad, company's came."

Well "that" was the singular of "those." And I didn't like it. We got under way. Rutter, every now and then looking back at me, was explaining to Dad just how he drove me down.

The scheduled mail-plane, relaying the pouches which Rutter had brought in, had departed immediately upon our arrival at Reno. Now, a few miles east of

that town it passed us on its return. The exhaust manifolds were belching black smoke and fire—motor trouble. Well, that was his worry. We high-tailed on our way.

Rutter couching his head on Dad's shoulder, had gone to sleep. Lord! How I like Rutter asleep! He was still in that state some three hours later when I set-down in Elko. He came to with a yawn, when our wheels hit the ground, stretched and said—

"Service."

As we taxied up to the dead-line and killed the motor, Dad Hayes said to Rutter and me—

"They've never seen me here; I'm just a magazine writer covering air-mail."

"Got a pencil?" Rutter kidded. "Haven't any fish concealed about your portly person?"

The old man, half-smiling, eyed Rutter.

"You're not half as dumb as Mac," he said and climbed from the plane.

Pilot Jack Howard, waiting to fly the mail into the next station, Salt Lake City, came up and inquired as to the cause of the delay at Reno.

"Coming out of Reno," Rutter told Howard, "the pilot forgot something; he got into the air, and his motor was missing."

"Did Vale fly up from the Coast?" was Howard's next question.

"Me," Rutter said, "I flew the mail into Reno. Vale went south to 'L. A.' early this morning."

Howard seemed anxious about something. He moped around our plane and then got Rutter to one side. Dad Hayes kneed me in the pants and said:

"Pump that bird. Find out what he wants to know about Vale."

When I came to where Rutter and Jack were talking, I heard the latter ask—

"Did Vale send his musette bag along with the pouches to Reno?"

I was surprized at Rutter's evasive answer.

"Never knew Vale had a musette bag," he said, and winked at me.

"So he's a fisherman, too," was all Dad said when I reported back to him. Then, after some thought, he added, "You monkeys seem to be carrying everything in these planes but mail."

Which line of talk was very strange to me. As I saw it, other than mail, we carried nothing but lots of bad luck.

When we took off again and started for Salt Lake City, Howard was still impatiently pacing the field and scanning the western sky. Of course, I too studied the possible presence of another plane; but the delayed flyer was no place in sight.

On a familiar airway route the actual flying demands little attention. Once off the field and safely into the air, you check up on the instruments of your dash, satisfy yourself that the motor is running smoothly, strike your course, and begin to wish that you were there. There are no female eyes now to watch and marvel, so the romance of air ends. The thing is killingly monotonous work. Flying alone on cross-country, day after day, ceases to be the continuous whirl of scenic pleasure one might imagine it. It is a lonesome calling of long, weary miles and nervous suspense. As time goes on, a pilot either becomes as temperamental as an actress—and craves an audience—or grows batty like a lighthouse keeper, reticent and dumb. Unless, of course, he be blessed, like Rutter, with the gift of sleep.

Rutter, knowing that I had at least two hours and a quarter of flying ahead, went out of the picture again. A somniferous, storm-promising, hot desert wind had set in to blow; sleeping came easy. Off to the south, nigger-head clouds were beginning to bank deeper and deeper. Not so good! So I opened the throttle a little more, pushed ahead on the joy-stick, and prayed for the Lake. It was either my off-day on prayer or I was in the wrong pew. The storm got us at Great Salt Lake Desert.

Just as we came in over that great stretch of sand, visibility went out and the sky dropped. The wires and struts

were running water from their trailing edges, and, lashing it into my face, the propeller shot the beaded water back. There was only one thing to do and I did it—kept going.

At a point far out on the desert we passed a horse tied to a post. Alone, it endured the gale. Its tail and mane gave some idea of the blow. Some wind! And a strange time and place to find a deserted horse. It would be humane to turn him loose. But no.

To land a plane on that wind-swept desert meant a wind-wrecked ship—and a black mark on a pretty good flying record. Also, this storm might run two or three days; except for the rusty water in our radiator we had no sustenance; keep going is right! Rough storm, horse! Good-by!

I had dropped to within a few feet of the plate-like, wind-ruffled sand, and, at the same time, turned off to the north with the idea of finding the railroad. Then, locating the U. P., with the rails as a guide, went on and on. The rain bothered Rutter. He snuggled in a little closer to Dad, and resumed his nap. Finally, quitting the railroad at the lake's shore, we crossed the water, picked up the Salt Air Amusement pier on its east side and easily reached the air-mail field a few miles beyond.

"What do they pay you jay-birds?" Dad Hayes asked as we climbed from the plane.

"Six cents per air-mile," I told him.

"You could make more than that driving a nice slow hearse," the old man decided. He had been thrilled.

And it rained, rained, rained.

"I can think of plenty places better than Salt Lake to be exiled in," Rutter remarked, two days later, when it continued to rain, rain, rain.

"No rain on the Coast—" Dad Hayes, reading a paper, found something of interest—"and your man Vale is sure flying them high, wide and handsome.

"Here's an article about Vale breaking the Coast record for a hop between San Diego and the Bay City. He knocked down the distance in four hours flat."

"With a tail-wind," said Rutter. "With a —— of a tail-wind, or I'll eat my other shirt!"

"And here's another," Dad exclaimed, a few minutes later. "Yesterday Vale hopped off and made Tucson, Arizona, in nine hours. Now what you think of that?"

"Think I'd like to have his drag with air-mail," Rutter mused.

"How does he do it—what's his stall?" Dad Hayes questioned.

"Oh, he's working high-pressure stuff on the different Chambers of Commerce; flying in on them; showing them what air can do," I went on to explain.

"Boosh-wah!" said Rutter. "Don't mind me if I seem to be laughing."

"Rutter," the old man said, "methinks you and I should hold talk together."

"Methinks you have another think coming," Rutter laughed. "You 'tend to your knitting, old cock, and Rutter will go on seeing nothing, saying nothing, hearing nothing, and knowing less—pretty much the same as our super."

"Tucson," Dad said half aloud. "Tucson—I'd kind of expect that."

Tucson was just a town to me. It was near enough to the Border to smell heavily of contraband booze, dope, chink-running, etc. Those Border towns were good places to be away from.

"How's the airway between here and Tucson; how long would it take you to fly me there?" Dad inquired.

"It's about five hours due south. The going is good, fair places for service along the way but, if it's all the same to you, let's stay right here at the Lake."

"Maybe yes—maybe no," the old man promised. "In the meantime, can you birds guess how long this storm might last?"

The storm whooped her up for another day, then went as quickly as it had arrived. Jack Howard had never made his flight. Between Reno and the Rockies, no mail—that is, air-mail—had moved during those three days.

WHEN the storm cleared, on Friday, the mail came in from the East on time. Pilot Mann took it out, West, on time too. Rutter, scheduled to start for the Coast with the ferry ship and saying that he wanted weather reports, continued to stall around the hangar. Shortly after noon, from the Elko field, we got the usual wire that Howard was on his way with the east-bound pouches. But Rutter and the weather could not get together. He still stalled.

Three hours later, Howard was a little overdue. But it was not a new thing, this thing of having Howard break schedule. His was a reputation for good flying in hotel lobbies; but air-work—well, that was another horse with a different collar.

By five o'clock Jack was long overdue, and a constant scanning of the western sky had failed to bring him into Salt Lake City. A wire from Salduro, near the edge of the desert, answering our inquiry, advised us that Jack had passed north of that town, flying on time. This gave us some idea of his probable location should we find it necessary to inaugurate a flying search, which was very likely.

At five-thirty it was suggested that I take my plane and comb the desert. Dad Hayes asked to accompany me; so we took-off and headed west.

There were still a few hours of daylight left as we crossed the lake. The sun was just dipping into the red haze high above the mountains on the western rim. The evening stillness was upon the air, and that's the ideal time for flying. Prematurely, it seemed, a pale full moon rode high in the cloudless heavens, awaiting its predominating hour when the sun must abdicate this realm of desert solitude and awful distances.

Somehow I had a hunch that we might locate the missing Howard in the vicinity where, previously, I had seen the tethered horse. I flew my course directly to that point. Somehow or other, that hunch seemed to take on importance, I knew not why it should. I thought that, perhaps, finding the horse there, Howard might have landed and turned it loose; and, in so doing, stalled his motor. If this were the case, single-handed, he would be unable to start and would need our aid in cranking.

I could not dream, at that time, how truly this premonition would materialize. A search of a very short duration sufficed to prove that we were working on the correct clue. Approaching the location, down there on the sand, I could see something out of the ordinary. And it could be only one thing; crashed and wrecked, twisted and torn, was Howard's plane. I hoped that we might still be in time to render some assistance.

To those outside the game, a bad smash has an awe-inspiring effect. For those within the game, it causes little joy, I might say in passing. Dad, immune as he was to surprizes and heavy situations, proved to be no exception to the rule. He silently climbed over the side and out of the plane after I had shot my landing near the wreck. Strange as it may seem, and hard to say, this was to prove a godsend to the old man.

The torn and shattered surfaces, wings and body were strewn over a hundred feet of desert space and, as we neared the pile of wreckage, Dad stooped, picked something from the ground, and repeated time and again—

"Fish, fish, fish!"

Under the pile I found Jack, broken, senseless and bloody. I unbelted him and dragged him forth. He was still breathing—pulsating, hardly more. The signs were bad. I had seen them before.

Turning to Dad for help, I thought that he had become demented; wide-eyed and grinning, he still picked up stray specimens of mackerel.

"Fish on the Great Salt Desert," he was saying. "Fish on the desert, but not mountain fish; not desert fish, but snow fish. Now, isn't nature wonderful?"

At last, coming to a partial realization of Dad's discovery, I deserted the near-corpse to watch him rip open another mackerel and extract many small packs of contraband dope. Examining the fish,

I stood baffled. They appeared as when taken from the water, evidently not cleaned and showing no signs of having been cut and sewed, or in any way mutilated.

"This has me stopped, Dad," I finally admitted. "How did you tumble?"

"Well, I know fish, and when that mutt, Pig, brought them out the first time, I knew that they were too solid. These mackerel have been gutted through the mouth. Not even the gill-flaps or throat organs were disturbed. Vale's Chinese fisherman, like most Chinks, is a patient worker. Of course, you know, these are the very fish that Pig found. See our old finger-marks?"

He passed the telltale find to me. Here and there, on a few fish, the indentation left by Dad's testing, inspecting fingers still remained. Then at the Bay City, the old man had, no doubt with this minute in view, disrupted the scale formation in handling the mackerel.

"Salt Lake City is getting to be a snowbirds' paradise," Dad explained. "If it goes on much longer they'll be moving the winter sports up here from Truckee. That, of course, is why I'm here. It had us stopped for a long time. The Lake's a hard place to bring stuff into, and we never suspected you monkeys of anything. Fact is, I only went around to Googan for transportation. Then your Pig mutt stepped into fame. But here's one for you to answer: Why did Howard land out here? Why this crash? And how come that you flew straight to this spot?"

He naturally looked to me for the answer to the last questions. I had been dumb long enough; but I was beginning to put a couple of twos together and they were rapidly making four.

I found a purpose now for the desert pony and the saddle-bags which it was wearing when I first noticed it tied down there in the storm. Between us we worked it out and came to this conclusion: Here in the desert, to avoid suspicion and curiosity at the landing field where nearly all hands were chronic fishermen, the dope was transferred to the saddle-bags. The pony, tethered here since the night before—and surely hungry and nearly thirst-mad—would lose no time, once turned loose, in heading for the nearest water-hole. And the nearest water-hole, I knew, must be to the south. But where?

Jack Howard, I knew, was out of the case for all time, but he had colleagues beyond this desert landing-place and the horse. These, I felt and hoped, would be found to have no connection with air-mail. Once more I had a desire to sleuth; and to help Dad as much as possible.

There was no logical reason why a desert landing should have resulted so disastrously as this. Under almost any conditions the average pilot can get down with damage to neither plane nor self in such a place.

A west wind was prevailing, and, in order to make his landing safe and sure, a pilot would naturally come in from the east, against the wind. The general position of the wreckage satisfied me that Jack had done this, but the crash had occurred several hundred yards beyond the usual position of the horse.

At the hitching post there was a blood smeared halter with torn and broken cheek-straps. A few feet away lay more than half of a propeller blade and, to one schooled in this business where mishap turns good planes to junk, the rest was clear.

Without question, Jack, with his usual cocksuredness and lack of ability, had tried to land as close to the horse as possible. He had misjudged the distance; overshot, perhaps. Or a side wind got him at the last minute, with controlling speed gone, and threw the plane, literally landed it upon the horse. The propeller, either striking the horse or post or both, had shattered. Seeing his mistake, Jack had evidently fought hard in a vain attempt to redress with power, resume flying, and go on to another spot beyond the horse. Then, perhaps, he pulled up too steeply from the ground.

When any appreciable amount is broken from a propeller-tip traveling at a

high rate of speed, the vibration—set up by the difference in the blades' lengths—is augmented tremendously; and in less time than it takes to realize the danger, the motor may be torn from its fittings and bearers and thrown from the plane. This had, unquestionably, been Jack's lot. The murderous commotion, vibration and racking had unnerved him; and, at the critical last moment he, maybe, ran out of knowledge, and the final crash followed.

A short distance from the post we picked up a trail of red. It was leading south. Knowing only too well what damage propellers do, I am willing to confess that I felt more compassion and pity for the four-legged victim, dying somewhere out there in the gathering twilight, than I had known for Howard. The dope discovery, of course, let Jack out as far as sympathy went; it would be hard to shed tears for anybody in that line of running.

Dusk and the narrowing circle were claiming the desert. The blood trail would soon be swallowed by the darkness. And Jack was still a breathing thing, and, as such, he rated some consideration.

We loaded the limp, yielding form of the ex-pilot into the mail-pit and molded it to fit and conform to the very limited and cramped confines of that bulkhead. Then we took-off, intending to make a hurried search and locate the horse if possible during the short minutes of daylight remaining. Not knowing the extent or nature of its injuries, we had no way of judging the horse's travel possibilities.

After a few minutes' flying, plodding slowly to the south, we found him. He had perhaps managed some four or five tortuous miles, dragging his left foreleg from a bloody shoulder and tracing his homeward trail in red.

Before we had landed the horse had caught the sound of our motor and, with ears erect and all a-tremble, he faced the direction of our plane's approach—just, no doubt, as in other watchful days. Close inspection revealed a sad spectacle. Not only had the whirling propeller pierced the leg and shoulder but, also, it had cleft the skull at the forelock. And in that bloody smear there were no seeing eyes. Entirely by instinct, and driven by fear, pain and blind bewilderment, the horse had covered this distance on his last patrol. The saddle-bags were in place. They were not marked. Nor did the horse wear a brand, unless it had been on the butchered left shoulder. The winds and shifting sands and rain of the past few days had obliterated all traces of the usual pony trails, so with Dad's *coup de grâce*, a shot broke the stillness, the pony sank to the desert, stiffened in a last convulsive kick, and the trail ended—for the pony and for us.

I was swallowing a lump. So was Dad. He spoke to avoid showing it.

"Just about now," he surmised, "somebody will be missing this horse and, perhaps, hankering for mackerel. Guess I'll wait and see what's to be seen."

It was agreed that I should return to the field and deliver Jack. It was high time for this. But I felt that minutes, medicine or methods did not count quite as much as miracles, in his case. Next, keeping the news from the papers, if possible, I was to secure blankets and return to the desert and rejoin Dad in the night's vigil. There would be plenty of moonlight, and a night flight and desert landing under such conditions is an easy task. So I took-off and started back.

A blowzy summer sun, halved and squatting on the horizon, shot its parting rays to the fast-ascending light-line of the purple Wasatch peaks at the eastern edge of parting day. Glittering on the foothill slope, the tabernacle city, as if vying with the star-lighter of the heavens above, hung light for light as night came apace. As I reached and flew the lake, the sun dropped through its last few feet of descent, splashing in the molten cauldron of the West. Below, from its silvered surface, the lake reflected the full moon at its zenith, while the shadow of my plane, to the left, raced me in a dead-heat across the water and to the mail field.

Within the hour we had our ex-pilot

on his way to the hospital, and I, accompanied by Rutter, was headed back to the desert. For miles Dad could be seen cupping matches between his hands to furnish a landing light for us.

"Bring any clay pipes?" Dad asked as the plane stopped rolling and we climbed out. "You're fine birds, coming to a wake without doo-deens!"

The night chill was claiming the desert. Dad, sitting on the carcass, shouldered his way into a blanket and turned to Rutter.

"Well, squirt, what you doing here? Thought that you thought that I had another thought coming."

"Why, you couldn't handle this case without me, old one! I've been working it my own way.

"Doc Miller, knowing the Army class so well in the Islands, got Vale as a hophead long ago. We knew that his trips south were to the Border. That's where most of the hop comes from. Of course, you know, we had no use for Vale, and we were out to get him. Never told Mac about it because Mac isn't quick on the savvy—he's more like an official.

"Well, when Howard showed so much interest at Elko the other day, being a great detective, I knew that another great detective would need some evidence. So I got it for you, Dad. I wired Miller to send that bag of mackerel. He did it; flew it into Reno himself, sent it on to Elko, and you know the rest."

"You're going to be a good man when you grow up, if at all," Dad predicted.

A FEW hours dragged by in subdued kidding. A coyote or two had discovered the smell of fresh meat and barked from the distance. Save for this, the desert emulated the traditional quiet of the tomb. It belonged to the big yellow moon, while we, subdued, seemed not to belong at all.

When the desert stillness shrinks up on you like that, you hope and pray for anything that is different, so along toward ten o'clock, when a light flickered and flashed miles to the south, we began to feel better. Then we eagerly watched, forgot the desert and waited.

Without doubt this was the party ex-expected. Soon we could discern the headlights and hear the hum of a motor-car, still miles away, but in the hands of one who knew his road, or better, the lack of a road.

Taking our blankets, we retired to the shadow behind the plane and some distance west of the carcass, and there waited. The headlights, swinging right and left, first found the plane; the car hesitated, then swung east and spotted the horse; now the car continued ahead.

We recognized the car before it had stopped. It belonged to Joe Brent. Brent was field clerk at the Lake hangar. He was alone now, and getting out of his machine. He had left the field before I arrived with Howard.

"Our whole —— family," Dad whispered, "seems to be in the fish business."

Surprized, the new arrival must have heard the whisper from where he leaned over the horse. We could see that he was not only surprized but dumbfounded and panic-stricken.

"Your business partner," Dad said stepping from the shadow, "crashed back at the hitching-post, spilled the fish and also the beans. Come clean, Brent, and I'll make it easy for you."

Joe Brent was not a real hard crook. He choked up and fought back the tears as he gazed at the pony, but expressed or showed no remorse at the fate of Howard.

"A bungling mutt," he said. "Always messin' up the detail!"

He balked at coming clean, however. At times the fear of a system is stronger than the dread of Federal law; and few outlaws choose to break the first link as long as they still believe the possibility of a fairly intact chain behind them.

Assuming an arrogant attitude, bordering on the vicious, Dad's prisoner—Brent was virtually that—proved to be of little help. He denied ownership of the horse and any connection with the ring. When asked to account for his presence on the desert at this hour he answered that he

was hunting and stopping for the night at his desert shack.

"Is that the nearest water-hole?" Dad asked.

"Guess it is," Brent answered.

The moon was on the wane and a cloud-bank forming in the southwest would soon nullify its light and terminate its recent usefulness. At this time landing-lights were not known on the air-mail fields, and a return flight in the extreme darkness, soon to follow, had no attraction for me.

I was for leaving the plane there for the night, and, in Brent's car, running south to his shack. But Rutter couldn't see it.

"Start the motor for me," he said. "I'll let her idle while you three reach the shack. Then turn your spotlight straight up and I'll come along."

Night and the desert are cold, stern realities, conducive to clear, unbiased thinking and productive of logical, ungarnished conclusions. There is no outside world, no distractions. What is *is*, and the thing that is comes home with a bang. Add to that Dad's ability to paint a vivid picture of departmental procedure and to convince one fully of the certainty of Secret Service methods and you begin to know why Brent changed his mind. It began to dawn on Brent that his was a sinking ship, hence the native urge of self-perservation and desire to be the first rat down the hawser-rope and to safety. A safety in whatever degree Dad's promise of partial immunity might afford.

Our guess about the pony and its part was right. The nearest water-hole was at Joe's shack located a few miles back from the trans-desert State highway on a quarter section of nothingness which Brent had homesteaded.

Brent, on the night of each day that Howard flew, went out to the shack and relieved the saddle-bags of their cargo. On his way into town Brent in turn delivered the dope at the last fence, "Snowy" Black, a well-known character about town. From Snowy it went many ways to the peddlers. Dad's chain, drawn and welded, ended with Snowy.

An hour of hard bumping, twisting and turning, expert pathfinding and reckless trail-blazing, found us at the rendezvous on the desert's edge. We turned the beam of Brent's spotlight into the sky, heard a motor roar miles back in the desert, and Rutter was on his way.

It took Rutter about ten minutes to cut down our hour of hard travel. He tore out of the night, dived the shack, and drove us, tumbling and scrambling, through the door.

"Does this shack boast only one bed?" Dad taunted Brent as the latter adjusted the lamp, revealing the interior of a small frame building. Just a few chairs, a stove and one ill-kept, disheveled, dilapidated "flop."

"When you're tired enough you'll brag about that bed," Brent came back, flatly, in defense.

"Well, we'll try it out later," the old man laughed. "In the meanwhile, let's start a fire and eat some of the evidence. I'm hungry."

Outside, a hundred yards or so from the shack, Rutter had landed. A good pilot never stops a good motor without first allowing it some time to cool down gradually. Rutter, while his motor idled and consumed the draining gasoline from the feed lines, remained in his cockpit. At his elbow, watching the belching blue flames shoot from the snapping exhaust ports, I stood and talked. Outlined in the doorway's light, Dad and Brent were standing.

"Do I hear a plane?" Rutter asked leaning from his cockpit and stretching his neck into the south.

"You do," I assured him.

Coming up from the south, flaming thinly in the dark, we could see the exhaust fire of an oncoming ship.

The spotlight's beam was still straight up, and the newcomer, throttling down, glided straight in for a landing. Rutter, retarding his spark in order to throw out flame, shot a blast of throttle to his motor. The warning was just in time. The incoming plane opened up its motor, zoomed and shot over our heads. Then

it settled once more to the desert beyond.

In the faint light from his exhaust stacks, we could see the visiting pilot. Without leaving his cockpit, as if in great doubt, he had half turned in his seat, pushed back his goggles, and was pondering. Perhaps wondering at the extensive gathering at the shack. Maybe he smelled a rat. At any rate, we saw him replace his goggles slowly. That meant just one thing—he wasn't going to take any chances, but he intended taking off again.

"Hop in, Mac!" Rutter chirped. "Let's take a ride!"

I SHOULD have known better than to ride with Rutter, but before I had any time to do some sane thinking, my legs had climbed me into the mail-pit, and we were under way. As we took off—headed north—the other plane roared overhead going south. A few yards off the ground, Rutter pulled up in an insane, heavily banked climbing turn and we were in close pursuit.

The flame from the other's motor made following easy. He had a very short lead on us and I knew that Rutter would, in quick order, run him down. The plane we were following was of the same type as ours. This meant that the equipment belonged either to air-mail or the Army. At that time no civilian owners were in possession of such ships. But our motor was an exception; there are motors and there is *the* motor. The one we were using could run any other of its kind ragged. Within ten minutes, Rutter had closed the gap and now flew at the other's side.

With his free left hand, Rutter pointed for the pilot to turn back. The stranger paid no heed, but continued straight ahead. What Rutter next did was a caution.

You've seen a good cow-pony go around a bunch of horses and turn them back. As the cow-pony comes to the leading runner, he turns a shoulder low under the other's side and compels a turnabout. That's what Rutter did. So help me! I lost a year of life in that minute.

We were only a few hundred feet off the ground. Rutter had waved and pointed just once. The flyer, as I mentioned, had ignored the order. Then, shaking the controls, Rutter bellowed:

"Hold everything, Mac—that cocky —— is going to turn, or I'll know why!"

Our plane crowded ahead. The throttle was wide open and the motor running full-power. Slightly, very slightly, Rutter lowered our nose into a glide-dive and gathered more speed. It takes several minutes for a plane to reach its maximum speed and get to slipping through the air with all that it has. As Rutter cut in against the other's wing, and brought our left tip up and under the stranger's right—well, something had to give and I thought that it would be everything. At the last minute, the other pilot must have weakened and helped the turn. Through a hellish few seconds of flashing exhaust fires, snapping wing-tips, and roaring motors, the two planes shot skyward in a turning climb, and— Cold and frightened stiff, I watched the planes slowly untangle and resume their return flight.

The other's outer-bay struts were broken and dangling. Our left wing-tip's leading-edge was shattered, and the linen, streaming behind in the wind, fluttered at the trailing-edge. After checking the damage, as much of it as I could see, I turned to Rutter. He was no place in sight. But a minute later, with a cigaret aglow, his face came up smiling. And, herding the vanquished, we flew on and on to where the spot-light's ray cut the desert black.

Then, arriving at the shack, Rutter cut in above the leading plane and crowded it down. Stilled with the performance, I froze in the mail-pit and wondered at the fine-fingered control of Rutter's flying finesse. Just above the other's tail surface, we slowly lost altitude; and the beaten pilot—looking back over his shoulder—lost altitude too, and anxiously.

With motors idled, and throttles jazzing, the two planes eased toward the desert as one. When the stranger's

wheels reached the ground, hardly ten feet above, Rutter was still riding him. We goosed ahead, then settled and rolled to a stop. When the dust cleared, the two planes were within fifty feet of each other. Each pilot shut off his gas. The motors idled to a stop.

"Who have we here?" Dad asked as we approached the shack.

"This," said Rutter, "is the traveling man—Vale."

"Let's take a good look at you, sonny."

The old man led Vale into the shack and held the lamp close to his face.

"Vale?" he questioned. "He may be Vale to you people, but, late in 1917, this snappy young man stole and sold just about everything that wasn't nailed down at Mitchel Field, Long Island. Young's his name. And the day that we were going to put our hand on his shoulder, he took a plane and voyaged toward the Canadian border. By the time he gets out of Leavenworth, you monkeys'll be carrying mail across the continent in thirty hours in planes instead of on paper—and that'll be a long time."

"Thanks to me," Rutter said.

"Why thanks to you?" Vale bit off sourly.

"Why I faked those wires to you at every hotel in Tucson; and signed Howard's name to them. When your wire, saying that you were on the way to Brent's, came— Well, Jack was no longer interested in wires, so I read it. I had to get you here. A big detective is what I—"

"Why, you—"

"Don't say the naughty word, Vale, or I'll bust you so hard that they won't have to spend any money trying you," warned Rutter.

"Here, squirt!" Dad pulled Rutter back. "Where do you get the idea that you're going to start a private graveyard with a bird that it took me three years to get?"

"You got!" Rutter kidded. "Where do you get that stuff? You got!"

"Well—the bird that you got. You are pretty good. But you never will grow up."

At three o'clock, next morning, a new day was graying in the east. Shortly after three the two planes took-off and, within half an hour, were back at the mail field. The remaining work to be done was just the usual routine procedure for Dad.

"Wow! Baby!" Rutter laughed as we walked away from the planes. "Wait till old super Googan sees those wings! M'gosh! Shucks! but the old p-p-p-prince will be mad."

"WE'LL make this the last play of that famous game, Cats-As-Cats-Come, for I must be taking off," Rutter said. "Remember, as usual, the winner of the pot loses. The winner has a choice of either sending some smokes to Leavenworth for Vale or—"

"Black Jack's out," Miller shouted. "You win and lose, Rutter; are you going to send the smokes to Vale or—"

"I'll buy the choice dog meat for Pig," said Rutter.

And Pig, day by day in every way, waxed fat and lazy. For there is much that is fine about a dog.

Board and Lodging

BY

JOHN WEBB

ONE cold night I dropped—almost literally dropped—from a tank car at a little North Dakota town. I was stiff and sore, and ice clear through. Try riding an open iron car with the temperature thirty below! But I had to make this town, so I stuck it out. And here I was.

Straight through the deserted, wind-swept streets I went till I came to the house I had traveled four days to reach. I knocked, and in a minute the door opened and there stood the man I wanted; a big man with a bald head and twinkling little eyes. He looked me over.

"Another one, hey?" He looked closer. "Haven't I seen you before?"

"Two years ago, Sheriff."

"O-ho! To be sure! Well? Two dollars and a pound of t'bacco for thirty days—how about it?"

"Make it three dollars and two pounds of tobacco, Sheriff."

He considered. Then—

"Two an' a half an' a pound an' a half."

I nodded, and fifteen minutes later found myself in the town's snug, warm calaboose. Next morning I was taken to court and the judge—a friendly old fellow he was—gave me thirty days.

There were a dozen of us there, all hobos. We ate well and were comfortable, and had little or no work to do. We kept the jail clean and washed the dishes—that was all. The sheriff furnished us with cards and we played stud and draw for tobacco and what little money we had. We read and smoked and chewed and talked.

We had an eight-piece orchestra—one ancient banjo played by a fat, jolly, devil-may-care vagabond who could make it talk, two harmonicas, traps (saucepan-top cymbals, chair-seat snare-drum, wash-boiler bass-drum and a cowbell), three paper-wrapped combs and one tin flute. And the music we produced, tunes of the road and the sea, was not so bad as you might think.

The good citizens of the town furnished us with plenty of reading matter. We had only to whistle from a window and signal with our fingers and the saloon-keeper across the street would slip over with the designated number of containers of beer. We had a quartette, with a rat-faced, squint-eyed little tenor who had the sweetest voice I have ever heard. We slept in cells, but were never locked up, and the front door was locked with the key on the inside—to keep intruders out. Every Sunday the town parson brought us a bag of apples; he sermonized us and told us how to be good little boys and keep out of jail. The apples were good.

The sheriff, you see, got five dollars for every arrest; the judge got seven dollars for each case tried. The mayor of the town was also keeper of the only hotel; he catered the jail and made a profit of so much per head—though it can't be said he didn't feed us well.

When my thirty days were up I left the jail, walked a block down the street, met the sheriff and was again arrested, and in due course, sentenced. When this term was up, however, the back of the winter was broken and I was getting restless, so despite the sheriff's protests and inducements I said farewell to the good little town and the good little jail, shook hands with the sheriff, promised to visit him again the following winter and caught the east-bound freight on the grade.

The Fiddler remembered

Old Hart's Guns

OF THE four hundred men and thirty women who made up the town of Bannack Cityin the Beaverhead country, there was none who so thoroughly disliked the Grasshopper Creek settlement and its free and easy way of living as did Annie Malin. Bob Malin, her husband, and a product of the same New Hampshire environment, was naturally gregarious; he found no fault. The unconventional appealed to him. Both were used to mountains, but not to such as these crowding almost every horizon of what was being made into the territory of Montana.

The young couple came with the wagon-train bound for the Salmon River and their sojourn on the Grasshopper was not premeditated, but due to the outfit's almost unanimous vote to winter there. Mrs. Malin had preferred pushing on to the Salmon, which she pictured as a quiet farming country. She strongly resented the encircling mountains, and when the first snows dusted the divides she spoke of the glistening peaks as "bad old men with white hair."

The transition from wholesome, rough-and-ready living to brutal lawlessness had yet to come. Potential criminals were brought in by every wagon-train, but these remained quiet for the first few weeks of home-making. Bob Malin responded to his new environment with much gusto. He came into prominence early, when a long-haired bullwhacker picked a quarrel with him. They fought it out in a ring of enthusiastic spectators. The bullwhacker attempted gouging and kicking and received the whipping of his life. Malin fought as if enjoying it hugely. His victory placed him on a bit of an eminence, and when a husky miner or mule-skinner heated his fighting blood

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with trade-whisky, the natural thing to do was to hunt up young Bob and have a gruesome set-to.

Malin continued winning, dropping man after man with the skill of a boxer plus the strength of a young bull. Nor did he seem to resent the foul tactics of his antagonists. When Jim Stuart suggested he practise less fair play and meet them with their own tricks he laughed good-naturedly and replied:

"But I have enough advantage as it it. They fight the only way they know how. It's a clumsy, bungling way."

But that he could employ rough-and-tumble tactics was proven when he accepted a blacksmith's challenge to wrestle and threw the man over his head and nearly broke his neck. After that aspirants ceased to crowd forward. Granville Stuart, who with his brother ran a store, warned Malin after the smith had been carried to his cabin:

"Bob, you're mighty nifty with your fists and wrestling tricks, but we're going to have men here who don't fight that way. From what I've learned in every new camp I've been in, 'way out to California and back here, you're going to stub up against a gun some day."

"Nonsense, Gran. Why should any one want to shoot me? I never pick a fight. I never fired a gun. Never carried one and never will. The boys I've mixed up with don't hold grudges. We're all good neighbors."

"Well, it'll be the first gold-camp I ever was in if a gun-fighter don't make his appearance soon."

But Malin refused to picture himself in any trouble with a gun-fighter. When such a pest blocked his path he would politely draw aside and give him the right of way. He remained popular with almost all the men he whipped.

Perhaps the only one in Bannack who disapproved of Malin's fighting was his wife. She was young and pretty and often misunderstood because of her prim, almost severe little manner. Some marveled that one so precise should have married the fist-brawling young giant. She also was said to be "stuck-up" because she could not suppress her inclination to be censorious of the easy-going life.

Possibly the women were more given to this criticism than were the men. And yet "Buz" Caven's seventeen-year-old wife adored her; and surely Mrs. Caven was one who was made for life and laughter and intelligent toleration. "Limpy" Kansas, the crippled fiddler, worshiped Mrs. Malin from his first glimpse of her. He often limped up the slope to the cabin, even after she supposed she had made it plain he was not wanted.

Her husband in vain urged her to "thaw out," but she could not shake off the routine mannerisms of the quiet New England village. She would always resent a neighbor's bursting into her cabin without the formality of rapping on the door. She took her turn at entertaining in her immaculately clean home, but her guests always sensed the restraint that ever seemed to envelop her. They never felt free to "cut loose." They vastly preferred the Caven cabin and its harmless license and boisterous good nature.

Bob Malin laughed and joked and fought tremendous battles and held no grudges. Mrs. Malin was coldly respected. But had it not been for her husband's irrepressible good nature only a few would have called at the cabin.

One day Jim Stuart said to his brother—

"I'm wondering if it's possible for her to let go and act human."

Granville replied:

"It's bred in her blood and bones to hold herself back—a good woman who fears she's committing a sin if she finds herself having a good time. Watch her

when she dances. She likes it, but believes she's falling from grace."

Before snow stopped work on the creek bars Mrs. Malin exemplified New England thrift by helping her husband. Her conscience permitted her to like money. There was a quaint charm in her trim figure, in the rich color of her delicate face, as she industriously cleared away the dirt down to the thin layer of pay-gravel that carpeted the underlying limestone. There was a likableness even in the pains she took in parting her hair and drawing it down on the sides and snugly confining it in a net low at the back. It grated a bit on some log-cabin housewives that they never caught her looking untidy. Men at work near the Malins sometimes complained to each other that they could not express their true feelings with helpful profanity "along of the Malin woman."

Yet these would pause and ease an aching back as they watched her methodically pulling up sagebrush along the edge of the claim and shaking off the sand and fine gravel into a pan. This "panning the sagebrush" yielded from twenty-five cents to a dollar a pan. Mrs. Malin declared it to be ridiculously high wages for a man, let alone a woman, to earn. Where other women responded to the crude environment and dressed in rough, serviceable stuffs, Malin's wife had brought her hoop-skirts with her. Her figured skirts swayed from side to side as she walked or worked, and more than one truant eye approved the slim, shapely ankles. She was intensely feminine in her personal appearance at all times.

But there was her reserve even when she enjoyed herself at the dances. Her various partners sensed it, like an intervening sheet of thin ice. Some believed she would have had just as good a time if she danced alone. Certainly there was no suggestion of abandonment to the tug of the music, even when her husband was her partner.

True enough the music consisted only of a fiddle, but three men in Bannack were master hands with a bow. Throughout the winter of 1862-'63 there was an endless argument as to which was the best of the trio. Doubtless a vote of the citizens would have left it a tie between Lou Smith and Buz Caven. What Limpy Kansas' following lacked in numbers was made up in enthusiasm. Mrs. Malin caused the old man to thrill with a wonderful delight one day when she told him:

"I like your fiddling best, Limpy. Sometimes there's a stretch of sadness in it, reminding us we're all mortal."

After weeding out the undesirable element there remained ten men for each woman at every dance. Tickets were five dollars, ladies free. The affairs were most orderly, as none showing the effects of liquor were allowed in the long room. Regardless of this restriction patronage always was up to capacity. It was no place to whoop 'er up, and it was surprizing to observe the number of best suits that had been packed in from both coasts. Malin was one of the few men who wore a white shirt. His wife was a famous one for stiffly starching a bosom. George Ives, an affable young man of pleasing appearance and excellent manners, was another who expressed himself in dress. The greater number of men were content with flannel shirts and the concession of a necktie.

At these pleasurable gatherings each woman was expected to dance every number so that every holder of a ticket might get his money's worth. This was understood and, since it was in the way of duty, Mrs. Malin lived squarely up to the rule. The young men preferred the waltz and schottische and the varsovienne. The older men remained loyal to the Virginia reel and the quadrille. Mrs. Malin danced them all quite elegantly and always with her precise deportment.

The first night young Ives was present he was attracted, very obviously, by the New England girl. Her restraint appealed to him. He danced with her, and then eagerly sought another dance.

"The men take turns. It's understood," she explained.

"We get along so well together," he sighed. "I forget everything when dancing with you."

Young Mrs. Caven would have laughed good-naturedly at his speech. Mrs. Malin frowned slightly, colored a bit, and with a stiff little courtesy turned to whirl away in the arms of one of the Stuarts.

While these neighborly gatherings were being enjoyed, another stratum of life was seething all around the dance-hall. Fiddle music was often punctuated by the bark of a revolver in the street or in a near-by resort. Acts of lawlessness were of daily and nightly occurrence. Perhaps no gold-camp ever had such a high percentage of the worthless and vicious as was housed in Bannack that first winter. Affrays with deadly weapons were so frequent as to be accepted as concomitant conditions, as were storms and fires. So long as these bits of violence were confined to the criminally inclined the decent element was unalarmed.

But when Charles Guy said good-by to his friends of the dancing circle and started for Salt Lake for supplies, and was found murdered at Red Rock Creek, horses and money gone, the law-abiding were enraged. A citizens' court must be organized to function until a real court could fetch the law to the Beaverhead country. A group of men in the Stuart store discussed the murder and checked up the local rascals. They were unable to direct suspicion against any individual, although they could name more than fifty who were believed capable of murder. Limpy Kansas, seated on a stool, so his bald head could rest against the log wall, listened with owlish intentness in his slightly protruding eyes. When the talk waned he suddenly declared—

"Bet it's some of Old Hart's work."

"You're crazy, Limpy," Stuart told him mildly.

"Who's Old Hart?" asked Bob Malin.

"He was a bad one. Dead these ten years. Killed in Salt Lake in '52," Stuart explained. "I saw him at Sam Neal's ranch, down in the valley of the Sacramento in September, '52. He was then running away from the coast after two years of deviltry. Had just killed a man on the Feather. I'd just crossed the Sierra, and every new impression was carved deep in my mind. I saw many tough customers after that, but Old Hart with his funny beard will never be washed from my mind. He was like a man peeking through a hole in a hair-curtain."

"If folks knew he was a criminal why didn't some one stop him?" asked Malin.

Stuart smiled grimly and explained:

"No one in my party had lost any killer. Don't know why they called him 'old'—his beard and hair were brown."

"Feller from Deer Lodge Valley was letting on two months ago that Old Hart wasn't ever killed," said Limpy.

"Well, he didn't kill Guy, even if he's alive, which he ain't," said Stuart. "Hart wasn't a road-agent. He never made any money out of his killings. Just a bad one. He was always hunting for another of his breed who had made a reputation."

"Injuns may've killed Guy," said Limpy.

Veterans shook their heads. Lou Smith insisted—

"Either some skunk here on this crick, who knew Guy was going with money to buy goods, or some one coming here who met him and shot him for his outfit."

While the murder was still a topic of discussion Mrs. Malin was surprized one afternoon by George Ives calling at the cabin. As she opened the door he stepped inside and casually said—

"Thought you might be lonesome when I saw your husband talking about the killing in the store."

She was nonplussed. Her neighbors dropped in without knocking, an omission she never could get used to, but this was different. She had danced with him at two parties, just as she had with other bachelors. He repelled her and yet attracted her.

"Take a stool," she primly invited.

He seated himself and lazily glanced about the big room, partitioned off at

one end by a calico curtain. There was not much to take inventory of: a hospitable fireplace, a shelf holding half a dozen books, the table, stools and basket of sewing.

"This isn't what you've been used to," he said sympathetically.

"It is different," she affirmed stiffly, yet feeling a sudden desire to talk, talk volubly with some one who held her slant of view. "The journey was hard. Not hardships so much as the change—"

"Oh, I understand," he eagerly assured, "a woman with a refined nature like yours would find much to overcome. Too much, I dare say. I'll venture that you never will get used to it."

"I hate it!" The passionate confession was out before she could check it. She colored to her hair and endeavored to amend, "I don't mean just that. But it's so different. The mountains hemming us in. The grimness of the timber. This hut of logs."

"It's raw and ugly," he agreed gently. "You'll never be happy until you're taken back to civilization."

"Oh, I'll do well enough so long as Bob's with me. We've burned our bridges." And she glanced from the window and wished Bob would come.

Ives leaned against the wall and continued:

"Men have more relaxations than women. Your husband, I notice, is very fond of cards. Women can't get together as easily even if they cared for cards."

"I never liked games."

"They're silly. Yet life itself is a game," he told her, laughing lightly and staring steadily into her brown eyes until she averted her gaze and was angry with herself for so doing. Much to her relief he went on, "You like books. You miss your music."

"Music! That's one of the things I miss most of all," she cried warmly, marveling while being pleased that some one should discover her surpressed desires. Bob was entirely lacking in that respect. She was impelled to add, "I don't know as I'd care for the dances if it wasn't to help out and if not for some of the things Limpy Kansas plays between numbers—'Way Down Upon the Swanee River,' and ones like that."

"Another of Foster's that I love is this," he murmured, and staring at the roof-beams, he sang in a pleasing voice a verse and the refrain of "Gentle Annie."

As he finished he lowered his gaze and smiling sought to hold her eyes. She came to her feet, wrathful that she could not stop the silly color from invading her cheeks. She hurriedly told him:

"You must excuse me. I have much to do."

He took his dismissal genially. Reaching the door he halted and said:

"Another time when you're not so busy we can have our talk out. There is much in common between us."

"I do not think men make calls, even in Bannack, unless accompanied by their wives," she discouraged.

"Then how could a fellow ever have a chance to tell a girl about his love? And where is the harm? Surely not in the call. Maybe the fault is in the mind of the person looking for something wrong."

He closed the door and was walking rapidly down the slope before she could answer, even had she so desired. She watched him from the window, a tumult inside her head. She hated him. She flushed with shame at dignifying him even to that extent. She went pale with rage at the suggestion she was being sought. He turned and saw her and waved his hand.

She paced the room, fighting the minutes until her husband arrived. She was very angry with Bob for being away, for keeping away so much. He was not always with her even in the evenings. Cribbage at two-bits a game and a cent a point engrossed him more than did his wife, she wrathfully told herself. She had talked much to him about gambling. He indignantly drew a sharp distinction between gambling and a "social game." But why had Ives picked her out as one likely to enjoy his company? It was ridiculous. It was

disgraceful. Why hadn't he turned his attention to pretty young Mrs. Caven? He knew better. Why did he feel free to seek Mrs. Malin?

Back and forth she walked, fighting conflicting emotions. A noise at the door halted her quick steps and she stared wild-eyed. Bob had arrived and she faced the almost impossible task of telling him about her caller and her reason for resenting the call. The fumbling of a cane relieved her. For once the coming of Limpy Kansas was most welcome.

The cripple fairly radiated delight from his broad face as he heard her words of welcome and beheld her smile. There was not much of Limpy except a framework of bones. His appearance when walking evoked mirth among the thoughtless and repelled the fastidious. His long legs flew out one-sidedly and grotesquely, and how they managed to escape entanglement with his canes was a source of constant surprize to the onlooker. One cane was longer than the other and had a big knob. When he came to a standstill he used this as a prop at the small of his back.

"Do you know if Bob's about ready to come home?" she asked. Before he could reply she practised on him by saying, "George Ives dropped in for a minute."

"Why?" asked Limpy, his bulging eyes staring in surprize.

"To see Bob, I suppose."

"Queer. He must 'a' known Bob was at the cribbage-board. Has he'n Bob had any trouble?" This was edged with apprehension.

"Good land, what a question! Why should Mr. Ives, or any one, have trouble with my husband?"

"Good feller. But so easy-going a stranger might think him a ripe one to pick on."

"Well, of all the nonsense! Pick on my husband? Why, I'd like to see any one try it!"

"No, Missus Malin. We wouldn't like to see George Ives try it. He is mortal quick with knife or gun— Hey! What's the matter? You going to flop?"

She was leaning against the wall, a hand grabbing at the bosom of her gown.

"Limpy," she begged faintly, "you go right back and find Bob. Tell him I want him. Tell him to one side so the men won't think I'm nagging him to come home."

Mumbling and muttering his willingness to oblige, he got on his feet and hitched and jerked himself down the slope to the street of log houses. Mrs. Malin stood at the window and watched the short day merge into dusk. She did not make out her husband's erect figure briskly swinging up the narrow path until he was close to the cabin. She had such a short time to decide and her thoughts were so incoherent she had no idea what she would say to him.

One set of words kept racing through her mind: "A ripe one to pick on." When the posse went hunting for young Guy's murderer she was glad her husband had not volunteered. She had feared there would be fighting and that he would be killed. Also, it had seemed almost as if such work must coarsen a man. Now she was regretting it wasn't natural for him to ride at the head of a posse. And how quick old Limpy had been in expressing the hope Ives would not direct his deadly attention toward Bob. Even the eccentric fiddler seemed to believe her husband in some ways was a weakling.

She was setting the table for supper as Bob entered bruskly. The only light was from the fireplace and the uncertain flames cast strange shadow effects on her face. He caught her and swept her off her feet and kissed her and boasted:

"Panned eighty-seven cents out of Gran Stuart at crib. Put on your best bib and tucker after supper. Boys got up another dance."

With a flare of temper, or nerves, she told him:

"I don't know as I care to go. I stay at home so much alone while you're mooning away time and money at the store I've gotten used to staying here."

"Money nothing! Penny a point. Just for fun. Cards haven't cost me anything.

Still have the forty dollars poker money I tried to give you. Be funny if we didn't go to the dance. Only rinktum in this hole we can go to."

"I don't mean to be ugly, Bob. But my temper gets out of control. Maybe it's being alone so much. Only people I've seen today is old Limpy—and Mr. Ives."

"Ives? Thought you said you hadn't been out."

"I haven't. He dropped in here for a few minutes."

Malin stared stupidly and exclaimed:

"We hardly know him. What did he call for?"

It was Limpy's question repeated.

"Land of Goshen! What does any one call on any one for?" she asked. "To get acquainted, I suppose. That's how folks usually get acquainted. Possibly he thought he would get acquainted with you, as he would have if you'd been at home."

"Neighborly of him," muttered Malin. "I remember now he watched our game and then went out and was gone some time and then returned."

"He was here but a short time. But frankly, Bob, I didn't like his calling. I mean, calling when you weren't here."

"Everything out here is so rough-and-ready," he complained. "But I can tell him not to call again when you're alone."

"*Can* tell him? Why not *will* tell him? And why not tell him he is not to call at any time?"

He shrugged his shoulders in an attempt at make-believe. He was conscious of helplessness, due to his ignorance of firearms. He roughly told his wife:

"I'll knock his —— head off if he ever comes here again. But it would make you and me ridiculous if I said anything until he calls again. Every one would say I was jealous. Some might be low-down enough to say I had cause—"

"Bob!"

"All right. All right. I wouldn't be to blame for what cheap folks might pretend to think. If he calls again I won't say anything—just knock him."

Neither spoke for half a minute; then he was querulously complaining:

"What puzzles me is why didn't you tell him he isn't welcome. A woman should know how to manage such situations without making talk by dragging her husband in."

Both stared at the fire in silence for another thirty seconds. Then Mrs. Malin quietly reminded:

"This isn't eating supper. We mustn't be late for the dance."

"Almost feel I'd rather not go."

"Then some of the neighbors would come to see if we're sick and they'd go away believing we'd quarreled."

"All right, we'll go."

THEY entered the hall just before the dancing began. Ives, near the door, at once joined them and genially announced—

"First dance is mine, per promise, Mrs. Malin."

"But I never promised," she calmly replied.

He laughed good-naturedly and confessed—

"I'd lie any time for the sake of a dance."

And as Buz Caven's fiddle started a waltz he swept her away, before she could further refuse, and left her husband smiling vacuously and with terrible anger firing his brain.

"I should have danced the first dance with my husband," Mrs. Malin remonstrated.

"No thrill in that. Give the poor lonely man a chance," he bantered.

"See here, Mr. Ives. Here is plain talking. Don't come to our cabin again until you're invited."

"Good land! Am I that poisonous? I thought we got along famously this afternoon. I'm sure you and I will always get along famously."

"I won't listen! It's infamous!"

And she attempted to draw away from him. But his arm was like iron. He threw back his head and laughed joyously. Malin bit his lips and wondered why his

wife should care to be amusing. And Ives was murmuring:

"You're wonderful. You're a mighty prim, stiff sort of a little person, but you're full of life once you discover yourself. You must be, to be so glorious, to be—"

"I will leave the floor!" she broke in hoarsely.

"And have folks asking why? Have some mistaken idiot pin a fight on me? You can quit, but his blood will be on your wonderful head."

Around and around the room they waltzed. Mrs. Caven, noticing Mrs. Malin's high color, praised it and told a neighbor that such exercise was good for the New Englander.

For the rest of the evening, or until the final number, Ives kept away and danced and laughed with any woman he was lucky enough to secure for a partner. But when the fiddler struck up the good-night waltz Ives hurried to the Malins again. Bob felt his wife's hand clutch convulsively at his arm.

"Against the rules for a man to dance with his own wife," Ives announced smilingly.

Without a word the Malins swept away and, after watching them for a few moments, Ives left the room.

When the party broke up Mrs. Malin was eager to walk along with the Cavens. She feared lest Ives' audacity might prompt him to appear and claim her company. She also dreaded the silence that would be between her and her husband once they were alone in their cabin. Her friends never had heard her talk so sprightly.

But there had to come the stark moment when the two closed the door behind them. Without remembering to remove his hat, Malin stared at her. She was trying to think of something to say to break the silence when he said bluntly—

"Annie, that devil is hunting you!"

"And you can tell me that, Bob?" she whispered. "If you believe it you should be hunting him."

His bleak gaze found the revolver hanging from a peg. In a jerky voice he said:

"I think it has come to that. I'll do my best."

Instantly she was clinging to him, sobbing convulsively.

"—— him!" he whispered. "It won't take thirty minutes."

He shook her off and started toward the gun. Again she threw her arms around him and held him with all her desperate strength, and cried:

"I spoke like a poor fool! You mustn't leave this cabin!"

"I'll kill that skunk before I sleep!"

"He is deadly with a pistol. You would have to take him unawares. They would hang you for murder! A stand-up fight in public would be bad enough."

"Bad enough for me," he grimly admitted. "But I don't care what they do to me if I can get the first crack at him. Let go of me!"

"No! They'd say you had cause—that I was to blame. You think to go to his cabin to shoot him! It won't do, Bob. You must listen to me. Come, we're both acting foolish. We're making a mountain out of a mole-hill. He's just a mole. We're not to blame for his thoughts. You can't kill a man for thinking. We'll ignore him. As soon as the roads are open we'll go back East."

He subsided and curtly agreed:

"All right, I'll sell the claim. We'll go back where we belong."

"You make me very happy, dear, I hate this country."

He stared into the ashes of the fireplace and did not speak for a minute. Then in a low voice as if talking to himself he said:

"I'd give my life for five minutes of gun-knowledge. God forgive me for ever bringing you to this hell-hole without bringing the knack of handling a gun! It isn't fear of death by violence that scares me, girl. It's the terrible fear of what might become of you after I'm dead."

"For God's sake, Bob, don't carry on like that!" she moaned. "You're not going to get killed. Now see here. I'll

sit beside you and lean against your shoulder. We'll be sensible. That beast may annoy me, but he can't hurt me. He'll never fight the way you fight—he doesn't dare. But he'll kill you if you go to him armed. We didn't understand life out here. But now we do understand and we'll be sensible."

"I'll kill any man who insults my wife!"

"You'll only leave me miserable for all time if harm comes to you from a ruffian. Now look, Bob. We're letting ourselves slip too far. Perhaps I did wrong in speaking about him. Yes, I know I did. It's a situation, as you've said, I should handle myself. And I will handle it myself. We've been thinking of this Ives as a monster. He's only a careless-living young man— Stop glaring at that revolver. It will not leave this cabin. Nor will you till I know you're perfectly sensible!"

MALIN burned with hatred when he went down to the store in the morning. It surprized even him to find how greatly relieved he felt after overhearing a citizen remark that George Ives had "pulled out." He wandered the length of the stores and saloons before he was convinced the young man had left town. On entering the Stuarts' store he gathered from casual remarks that Ives was gone for good. Even the mole-hill had been leveled.

Life in Bannack followed the usual routine of a gold-camp about to be winter-bound. Fortunately for the isolated community, the winter was unusually mild and did not dump enough snow on the divides to prevent freighters from making their regular trips to Salt Lake City for supplies. New Year's Day was celebrated with a grand ball, and by several knife and pistol arguments in various resorts.

The Malins were unusually gay at the dance, especially Mrs. Malin. If she watched those coming through the doorway she did it so surreptitiously that her husband did not suspect. One of her partners, young George Edwards, enthusiastically told her—

"You have the prettiest brown hair and eyes ever."

It pleased her, coming from the youngster. She pretended to scold him for indulging in gross flattery. But he stoutly persisted—

"All the fellows would be crazy about you if there wasn't any old Bob."

"But there is an old Bob. A very aged old Bob. Twenty-five years old."

"Bob or no Bob, I'm going to keep on liking you immensely, and more so."

She was flushed and prettier than ever when he escorted her to her husband. In the young man's presence she informed Bob he had a rival. Some one took her away and Edwards asked Malin to ride out on the range in the morning with him to look for some horses. Malin readily agreed, provided his wife could stay with the Cavens. He confided to Edwards his desire to get away somewhere and practise shooting a revolver.

"Great guns! Practise here— In the street— Anywhere," said Edwards. "Every one else does."

"I know nothing about guns, and the fellows would laugh at my awkwardness. I'll let you know in the morning if I can go."

After an evening of high spirits, and back in their cabin, with the world barred out, the Malins were silent until Mrs. Malin timidly remarked—

"I believe he's gone for good."

"I hope he's gone to the devil, Annie. It's shameful you should have to think about that fellow. Sing something to me. Sing 'Gentle Annie.' "

"No!" She amazed him by the fierceness of her refusal. Then contritely, "I don't know what's the matter with me, Bob. It must be the country. But we've turned the corner this night. We don't have to say 'next year' when we talk about going home."

"Yes," he agreed absent-mindedly, his thoughts straying into grim pastures. "We'll soon be going. By the first of April anyway. Think I'll ride out on the

range with young Edwards tomorrow. Good time to take the gun along and see how it shoots."

"No, no, dear! That's not the way. You'll do no practising with a gun. You'll not carry a gun. Old Limpy says a man's safer out here if he's unarmed."

"But his woman isn't," he quickly reminded her.

"Oh yes she is! After all there are many more decent folks in this town than there are vicious. I'd rather you didn't go away tomorrow, dear."

He finally promised—and thereby saved his life. Young Edwards rode away and never came back. His friends did not become anxious until several days had passed. By that time a light snow had covered his trail. Henry Plummer, already slated to be elected sheriff in the spring, rounded up a posse to search for the missing man. He was frank to say he feared foul play. Bob Malin went along, dreading what he might have to see. One of the searchers found Edwards' blood-stained clothing stuffed into the mouth of a badger-hole. The body was never found.

This second murder caused more commotion than a winter filled with saloon and street fighting. It was cold, beastly murder, that probably no passion other than greed had incited. Wherever men met in Bannack City the cowardly crime was the one topic of conversation. Enough vows of vengeance were registered to eliminate every scoundrel in the West.

Plummer suggested Indians as the perpetrators. Only Limpy Kansas endorsed this theory. One of the Stuarts frankly told Plummer:

"You're crazy, Henry. Do you suppose an Indian would leave clothing behind and carry away a dead body? Edwards had close to seven hundred dollars on him when he quit the town. Some one along this creek knew he was packing it along with him and followed and killed him. They hid the clothes to prevent identification if the body was found. Limpy, you know how to fiddle. Stick to that."

"Lawd! I don't go to pretend to know. Mebbe it was Old Hart."

Despite their ferocious anger the men could not refrain from laughing. Plummer remarked—

"Limpy, you're crazier than I am."

A few days later Limpy made his awkward way to the Malin cabin and took his accustomed place in the corner where he could support his body against the logs. He explained:

"Had a mighty hankering to sink another shaft in that 'Old Curiosity Shop.' Hit me mighty hard when *Little Nell* pegged out. Harder'n I'd reckoned at first. Mebbe because I never had a little gal of my own. Sometimes I feel she was the gal that would 'a' been mine if I'd ever raised a family. That Dickens galoot is some two-fisted fighter when it comes to slinging words. Old fiddle sounds mighty sad after I've panned out a few pages from one of his yarns."

"It's sad in places," Mrs. Malin absent-mindedly conceded.

"*Little Nell's* gran'pap was a queer old coot. Only human thing about him was his hankering to take a whirl at some bank-game. If he'd had brains and the right bringing up he might have been a dead-game sport. But they'd trim him here in Bannack quicker'n you could say scat."

"Bob's at the store?"

"Twenty-two dollers ahead and chasing a flush across the board when I pulled out."

"Nothing new about poor George Edwards?"

"Nothing. They laffed at Henry Plummer for saying Injuns might 'a' done it."

"But some one did it."

"Just as sure as poor George ain't been found, and his clothes has."

She shivered in horror. After taking down a worn book, the fiddler casually remarked—

"George Ives rode in couple of hours ago."

She stepped back as if stumbling and without a word walked behind the curtain.

Limpy became lost in his book, his protruding eyes slowly trailing each line of print to the end. When he had finished a chapter he looked up. Mrs. Malin was standing before the fireplace, her head bowed. Limpy suddenly said:

"Gun's gone. Bob took to wearing a gun?"

"No. It's around somewhere."

"Might as well be lost for good. Ain't worth a rip."

She faced him quickly and sharply queried:

"What do you mean? Won't it kill?"

"Only at close quarters." Her look of surprize caused him to display snags of teeth in a wide grin at her ignorance. He explained, "A body couldn't hit anything with it at thirty feet. Barrel's too short'n stubby for real shooting. You don't see no such guns toted out here."

She walked behind the curtain and came back with some sewing in her arms. He was returning to his reading when she told him—

"I dislike to interrupt you, Limpy, but would you mind going down and tell Bob to bring home some tea, and that I'm going to have an early supper?"

"Mighty glad to obleege you any time. About all I'm good for—and fiddling. Stuart's got some tea, but no coffee. Mighty comforting to be allowed to come here. I git tired of stores'n saloons'n the like. Mighty few cabins like to see me hanging 'round."

"You're always welcome, Limpy. Come any time," she encouraged.

His progress was painfully slow as he worked down the slight slope. A cane would advance, then a leg would double up to snap the foot forward. Then the process would be repeated with the other cane and foot. On a level he made better time, his bony frame twisting from side to side with more rapidity. As he drew up to Stuart's store he beheld Bob Malin standing just outside the door and staring at Goodrich's saloon. George Ives was in the act of entering the place.

The door closed and almost instantly there came the staccato bark of several shots fired close together. Malin yelped incoherently and surprized the cripple by starting for the saloon. What the cripple did not see was the glare of awful expectancy in the Easterner's eyes. Jeff Perkins, recently arrived from the lower country, bolted from the saloon and ran toward Malin. The latter panted—

"Some one get Ives?"

"Plummer's just shot Jack Cleveland and I'm —— glad of it!"

Malin wheeled about, not desiring to gaze on the ghastly sight. As he slowly approached the store door Plummer emerged from the saloon. He was between George Ives and a rascal known as Charlie Reeves. Their arms were linked through his, and he was excitedly mouthing a string of oaths. When Malin and Limpy entered the store a cribbage player tabled his last card, saying:

"Three for the run, and one for the go—Any damage done, Malin?"

"Plummer had a fight with Jack Cleveland and shot him."

"Was it an even-Stephen affair?"

"Don't know. Didn't go in."

"Bob has a squeamish stomach," remarked Buz Caven. "Can't stand the sight of blood. I could stand all day and see scum like Cleveland cash in."

Malin reddened slightly but frankly confessed:

"I never can get used to this —— country. I'm pulling out in the spring."

"But by spring you'll have seen the worst of it, Bob," encouraged Caven. "By spring it'll be as quiet as a village back in the States."

One of the Stuarts tersely observed:

"A man either does or doesn't get used to blood-letting. If he can't get used to it he might as well stop trying."

Some one suggested—

"Limpy probably thinks Old Hart did it."

This won a burst of laughter. Cleveland and Plummer had come to the new camp together. Plummer was very likable. His companion was vicious, and none would lament his passing out.

"All we have to talk about is bloodletting," complained Malin. "I can never wash the rotten stuff out of my mind. Guess I'll go home."

"Missus said for you to fetch home some tea. Come nigh forgetting," Limpy told him.

With downcast, brooding gaze Malin slowly walked to the cabin. Twilight was filling the creek bottom, but as soon as Annie Malin saw him she read dejection in the slow step and bowed shoulders. He entered and handed over the tea and wearily announced—

"That Ives is back." Then he swept his gaze along the wall and suddenly demanded, "Where's my revolver?"

"I took it down. We have no use for it. Thought I heard some shooting."

"Plummer shot Cleveland in Goodrich's saloon."

"Kill him?" she whispered.

"Oh, I suppose so. Gun-fighters usually kill when they shoot. I didn't go in. Unless I can be of some assistance I never like to crowd around a dying man. God! What a country!"

"What beasts of men!" she dully corrected.

Straightening his bent shoulders, Malin requested:

"Put the revolver back, Annie. May come to a show-down when I'll have to depend on it."

"No." And she shook her pretty, puritanical head decisively. "It would only trap you. It's no good unless you stand at close quarters. At thirty feet it will shoot wild."

Malin gaped at her in amazement and demanded:

"Look here, Annie, how do you know all that? I bought it for a good, serviceable gun."

"Old Limpy told me. He made fun of it. Says the barrel's too short for any distance."

Malin winced. There could be no neatness of technique in executing a man by jamming the muzzle of a gun against his body. An encounter at such close quarters must be fatal to both men. Plummer must have beaten Cleveland on the draw; for surely they were close together in the saloon. A gun-fighter could draw, fire and replace his weapon before a novice could get his clear of the holster.

He complained quietly:

"Storekeeper back East must 'a' lied to me. Tomorrow I'll buy a real gun."

"You won't!" she fiercely cried. "That Cleveland fellow probably carried two *real* guns. He's serious hurt or dead. His guns trapped him. Folks here know you never carry weapons. You'll go unarmed."

After supper they talked of their homegoing and simulated an enthusiasm that neither felt. In intervals of silence the husband dramatized himself into desperate, heroic rôles and always had to face the sickening conclusion that he knew nothing about guns and would be killed in his tracks before he could cock and pull trigger. His wife studied the flames and sought to learn how she could stand between him and the result of this very same incapacity. If the law of combat could permit him to fight with his fists she would ask no odds. He would do battle gladly and never lose his smile. But this battling on the edge of an open grave with a weapon he knew not of—

THE next day, mid-afternoon, she was behind the calico curtain when she heard the door open. Before she could look out or speak, Ives' musical voice was calling:

"Hello, folks! Any one at home?"

For a moment she thought to remain quiet on the chance he would depart, believing she was at one of the neighbors'. Then she heard his soft steps advancing toward the curtain and, catching up her sewing, she came forth to meet him. He gazed in frank admiration at her slightly flushed face. He also decided the anger in her eyes increased her charms.

"So you are at home, little lady," he greeted. "I'll always maintain you have the prettiest hair in the world."

Poor George Edwards had amused her

by saying this. The thought of his terrible fate unleashed the fury in her mind. She heard herself crying—

"You get out and stay out!"

He laughed in genuine amusement. Her flaming hostility doubled her desirableness.

"Well, of all the notions!" he softly exclaimed. "Is this the New England hospitality I've heard so much about? What's the matter, Annie?"

"You leave this cabin!" she panted, drawing closer to him.

The hands clutching the sewing were trembling violently.

"But why are you frightened?" he asked gently. "I dropped in to see Bob. And you behave like this!"

"I want you to go. Now! Don't come again!"

"You think you want me to go. But you must be lonesome staying here alone."

"Get out! Get out! I hate the sight of you. Can't you understand that? I hate you and all you stand for."

Suddenly he lightly clamped his hands on her slim shoulders.

"When a woman says she hates a man it shows she's growing interested in him. She may be scared to find she's growing interested— What—what!"

Something was digging into his side over the seventh rib. He glanced down over his left arm and beheld the barrel of the revolver.

"You clever little devil!" he softly admired, but never shifting his position. "Laying for me with the gun under the family sewing!"

"Release me or I'll fire!" she whispered.

"You'd kill a human being? You'd see me drop dying and bleeding at your feet? And what would you say when folks came and asked why you did it?"

"Yes, yes, yes! I'd see you dying," she panted. "I'd tell folks a beast broke into my home."

"And have them ask why your husband didn't take care of you. Be pointed out as the woman who couldn't depend on her husband—the woman who had to do her own killing. Then your story about a 'beast'—some might question that. You would never kill a man and have him cough his life out at your small feet for a little thing like this."

And before she knew his purpose he had bowed his head and kissed her.

She stared at him stupidly. He gently plucked the gun from her hand and tossed it on the table.

"I can't stop longer," he told her, while she stood as one completely dazed. "Have lots to attend to. I shall be away from town for a bit. But soon I'm coming back for you."

The sewing dropped to the floor. She remained motionless and did not appear to be hearing him. She seemed to have lost the faculty of comprehension. Ives ran on:

"This is no place for you, little lady. A prisoner in a miner's cabin when there are so many better places on the coast. A prisoner in this coop, while your husband is having a merry time with cards and his friends! What a fool he is to choose a store and cards to you! It almost makes me angry with him."

She rubbed the back of her hand across her lips and announced:

"I didn't kill you, but I can kill myself."

"And leave your husband to explain the why of it," he reminded her harshly. "Folks would say it was because he neglected you. Some might be so angry as to shoot him. You're not up to it. Wash that Eastern way of thinking out of your mind. Stop believing that everything enjoyable is wicked. Hitch up with a man who's capable of protecting you."

"You beastly loafer! My husband is a gentleman." But she did not raise her voice.

This time Ives' short laugh took on an edge.

"Your husband is a coward," he corrected. "He can't stand up for his own wife. You didn't discover the fact till you came out here. I fell in love with you the first time I saw you. It's your —— priggish ways probably. Something new. My first glimpse of your husband

told me he was a sheep. Tell your husband all about this little call when he returns from his cards and store friends."

"Get out and stay out, you miserable wretch! The door will be barred hereafter."

"A door is only as stout as the *man* behind it. After I get back from a little trip I'll have a frank talk with your husband. I'm going to tell him he can leave Bannack City now—"

"We're leaving in the spring," she broke in.

"Go away now, and alone," he completed.

"You are drunk or crazy!"

"Or go away later, and alone. But if he waits he'll take a far longer journey than if he goes now."

"You are threatening to murder my husband!"

"Kill him if he attacks me. There are men in Bannack this moment who will swear he has threatened to take my life."

She darted her hand to grab the revolver on the table and shrilly cried—

"After such talk as that do you think any one would blame me for killing you?"

"No one hears our talk. We can say anything. What you repeat folks would say was an excuse. Nothing like stout witnesses. I have them. Shoot and run to the neighbors. They'll say your Eastern priggishness or conceit exaggerated an innocent situation. I've been here before. Your husband never ordered me to keep away. Now I'll be going. I'll attend to everything. Don't you worry your pretty head."

"Why do you pick on me instead of another?" she demanded passionately.

He turned from the door long enough to answer—

"Your husband."

She was alone, frantically scrubbing her lips and wondering whether the world was coming to an end. She caught up a scarf and started to leave the cabin, to run to the store and tell her husband. Then she was seeing Bob, fists eager, rushing out to find Ives. She leaned against the door and wept. She could not send her husband to his death. The few months on the creek had taught her the rough code. There was no law. A man must look after his own.

Finally out of the chaos of tears and shame there grew up a definite purpose. She would make her husband take her away during Ives' absence. If Ives came again she would shoot him at the door.

She was busy with the supper when her husband came home. His exuberance told her he knew nothing of Ives' second visit.

"Good news, Annie," he greeted. "Three thousand dollars down for the claim. Buyer takes it unseen. Gran Stuart vouches for it. Ben Risley, the freighter, will buy. The money passes as soon as his freight comes in from Salt Lake."

"How soon?" she asked eagerly.

"Very soon, unless an unexpected storm blocks the divides." He paused and looked at her more closely. "Crying, Annie? You've been crying?"

"Homesickness, Bob. No; don't pet me now. My head aches—I'm out of sorts."

"We'll soon cure that, sweetheart. I've been selfish. I'll stay with you after this. You've been too much alone. You see no one."

"Get me in a wagon riding for home! That's the cure I need. We're not fitted for this country, for—"

She hesitated so long he gently supplied—

"Loneliness?"

"Yes, loneliness. Have Limpy Kansas come up each day and keep me company. He's like a friendly dog. He's lonesome too."

"But I'm to be here except when I have to run out to talk business."

"No. Enjoy your friends. I'll feel better if you do. No matter what I've said I want you to go on as usual. Limpy will be company and I can send him on errands."

"Old Limpy shall come every day and stay as long as you wish, and he shall be well paid." He studied her profile

fondly and added, " 'Most any one would be handsomely overpaid by the privilege of your company, sweetheart."

He knew her nerves were badly wracked because of the spasmodic little grimace on her face and her throwing her arms around his neck suddenly, hiding her head on his shoulder and weeping as if her heart would break. He held her tightly, alarmed at her grief. When she could control her voice she tried to make conversation by asking—

"No news, I suppose?"

She drew erect and wiped her eyes as he was replying with odds and ends of town gossip. He came to something disagreeable in his thoughts and became silent, his brows scowling savagely.

"What is it, dear?" she prompted.

"That Ives. Every time I think of him I see red."

"He called here for a moment this afternoon."

She had not intended to tell him, and she heard herself speaking as if listening to another person's voice. He came to his feet, glaring around the room.

"Where is it?" he demanded, his voice half-choked by rage.

"It's put away. You can not have it. It's useless for you to search."

"Then I'll use the ax!"

She was thinking only of him. He would be as defenseless as a kitten in an encounter with such a man as Ives. A blow in the Beaverhead country justified a bullet or a knife in return. She locked her hands about his neck and maintained her hold although he swept her off her feet in his endeavor to release himself. But she was fighting for his life. She felt infinitely older than he. She was pitying him for the incompleteness of his training for this new country.

"Let go! I don't want to hurt you, Annie."

"Sit down. We'll talk sensibly, like two men." She pushed against him, and as he dropped on a stool she swung herself across his knees. Before he could speak she was rapidly saying, "We're faced with a new problem. Back East you'd whip any loafer who annoyed me. Men don't fight that way on this creek. And it's the only way you can fight. Meet any of them back East where they would be hung if they used guns and you'd have all the advantage. I'm not going to be made a widow. You shall not toss your life away because men who fight with guns hope you will do it. Ives hopes you will attack him. He's coward enough to hope that. Because he's a coward and wants every advantage he may try to force you into attacking him.

"You must not do it! You have me. No matter what he says, if he says anything, you must keep your head. You must keep your hands off him. You must do it. You have me, so you are the winner. We'll pocket false pride and get back East as quickly as we can."

"Annie, no man can make love to my wife—"

"No man *can* make love to your wife, sir. That is a fact," she broke in hotly. Then more quietly, "But, Bob, I can't help it if a vicious man, or just a foolish man, is silly enough to imagine he is infatuated with me. If such a man is really infatuated, he loses and you can laugh at him or pity him. That poor boy George Edwards admired my hair. We 'd never laugh at him."

"But his calling here! By ——, I won't stand for him!"

"Hush! You've never told him to stay away and you never shall. If you did, then he would make you attack him. And he'd kill you. Old Limpy is my best guard because he is a cripple. The man who harms him will have the town against him. It's a game we must play out till we can leave. In every game it's wise not to do what your opponent wants you to do. Ives may play to make you fly into a rage. Don't. Always keep in mind the one great thing! You must live for me. Now we'll sleep better. We'll use our wits to meet a disagreeable situation."

She kept him in the house that night and by morning he was glumly conceding any assault he might make on an armed

ruffian would be simply a hopeless gesture. He surprized and delighted Limpy Kansas by visiting him at his cabin and stating his request.

"Wages!" roared Limpy. "You must be plumb crazy! A body should pay much for the chance to be company for Missus Malin. I'll be on my way in a jiffy."

As Malin walked toward Stuart's store he beheld Ives and George Carrhart ahead, talking near the latter's cabin. Malin tried to keep his wife's warning at the front of his mind. He feared he would forget if Ives looked at him. He knew he should attack did the man laugh. He slid his hand in his pocket and gripped the gun he had succeeded in finding, then drew his hand out empty as he remembered the long six-shooter Ives usually wore. A great joy surged through him as he drew nearer and discovered the two men were having a violent quarrel.

"I'll shoot you!" Ives exclaimed, and added a mouthful of vile epithets. Then he turned and ran to a small grocery store.

Malin stared in eager expectation. Ives was unarmed. Carrhart, after being threatened with death in the presence of a witness, would be within his rights to shoot and kill. But Carrhart did not fire on the fleeing man. He, also, was unarmed. He started for his cabin. Malin eagerly produced his gun and offered—

"Here, take this gun!"

"—— with it! Need real one," grunted Carrhart.

Malin dodged behind a second cabin and waited. Carrhart ran from his cabin carrying a revolver at his side, the muzzle pointing down. The grocery door banged and Ives sprang into the street and for some unaccountable reason looked for his opponent in the wrong direction.

"Now shoot!" cried Malin, just loud enough to carry to Carrhart's ears.

But Carrhart was strangely chivalrous. He stood and waited until his enemy swung around on his heel. Ives voiced a startled oath and fired first. The bullet hit the house behind which Malin was hiding. Carrhart fired and missed. Then the two ran to close quarters, Ives firing first, the bullet hitting the ground a few feet in front of Carrhart. The latter leaped forward and Malin yelled as the long barrel spouted fire and smoke almost in Ives' face. To his amazement Ives staggered back but seemed to have suffered no hurt. Carrhart, in a sudden panic, darted into his cabin and commenced firing from the doorway, showing only his arm and hand as he frantically discharged his weapon. Ives remained until he had emptied his gun and then turned and walked rapidly away.

The windows along the street were filled with eager faces as Carrhart came through his doorway. Malin held his breath as he saw the gun leveled at Ives' back. Then came the explosion and the onlookers saw the lead kick up the dirt ahead of Ives. Malin retreated to cover, weak and trembling. This Ives was a devil. No bullet could kill him. If a gun-fighter couldn't register a hit at that short distance how could a novice expect to succeed?

Then Malin was leaving cover again and experiencing great exultation. Ives was staggering from side to side as if very drunk. Carrhart, in another panic, ran into his cabin.

Across the street a man was excitedly crying—

"Last shot fetched him!"

Ives staggered about to face the cabin and hoarsely cursed Carrhart for "shooting a man in the back." Then friends ran from the nearest saloon to assist the wounded man. Malin gained the back of the Stuart store without passing up Main Street. When he entered Lou Smith was telling Granville Stuart that Ives was shot through the back, but too much to one side to be mortally hurt.

Stores and vicious resorts were emptying into the street to enjoy gossiping about the affray. Malin hurried home and, unnoticed by his wife, replaced the revolver where he had found it, at the head of the bed. Then he told her of Ives' narrow escape.

"It's a wicked wish, I suppose, but if that man had been killed I should be very happy," she confessed. "It's not that I fear for myself, but for you."

"He'll be laid up for a spell," moodily replied her husband.

"That's as good as if he were dead," she murmured. "It'll give us time to hitch up and start for home before he can drive you into fighting him and getting yourself killed. He'll keep on and die by violence without my wishing it."

Malin's bearing was more confident as he hastened back to the store that evening to get the latest news. Jeff Perkins was holding the floor when Malin entered. Perkins had called to see the wounded man and importantly explained how Carrhart's bullet had passed through on the left side, scraping the ribs.

"If the wound don't git poisoned he'll be all right. He's chuck full of fight and vows by something terrible he'll be the death of Carrhart once he gits up on his pins. Keeps two guns by his side all the time."

There followed an interval of peace for the Malins. Bob indulged in much "friendly" poker, while his wife called on her neighbors or busied herself in preparing for the homeward journey.

One day Jim Stuart, after losing twenty dollars to Malin on a bald-faced bluff, admiringly said—

"With your nerve you didn't ought to be bluffed by anything in boots."

"I don't go to be bluffed," replied Malin.

They were alone. Stuart, nevertheless, lowered his voice and gravely continued:

"All decent folks in Bannack are your friends, Bob. This store, you know, hears lots of talk. If a man can't defend his own this is a mighty poor place for him."

Malin counted his winnings and pretended not to detect any hidden meaning. Stuart kept on:

"Yes, sir, that's a fact. Man on this crick must be mighty quick to protect his own or pull out. Even to stopping loose talk."

Malin had to take notice now. He hoarsely prompted:

"All right, Jim. You've said too much or too little. Some one talking about me?"

"Ives has shot off his mouth. Not so much what he says but the way he looks and laughs."

"Looks and laughs at what?"

Stuart eyed him thoughtfully, then replied:

"I was speaking in a general way. Just meaning that George Ives is of a breed that needs considerable killing. Game of crib for a change?"

"Jim, if the boys will make him face me without his guns I'll bet my claim against four bits I can all but kill him inside of twenty minutes. I know it! But I'm no gun-fighter."

"That's too bad," said Stuart, and Malin left the store without playing the game of cribbage.

A FEW days after this interview Ives created much excitement by suddenly appearing on the street and walking toward Carrhart's cabin. All along Main Street the spectators were appreciating the dramatic values of the situation. Malin watched and waited and would have given ten years of life for a portion of Carrhart's skill with a gun. The invalid entered the cabin and closed the door behind him. The watchers held their breath, waiting for the booming announcement that the feud had been renewed. Minutes passed. Buz Caven suggested they were fighting with knives.

Then the anti-climax. The door opened and the two walked out arm-in-arm!

"Kissed and made up!" cried the bartender in Goodrich's saloon.

Jeff Perkins bustled down the street and announced Ives was going out to Carrhart's ranch to complete his recovery. Malin, who had been glumly silent, proclaimed his desire for a poker game.

"Take him some time to git well," remarked a lounger.

"He'll mend very quick," said Perkins. "He ain't starting for the ranch at once.

Let on he had a bit of business here to attend to first."

"Never knew he had any business except loafing," mused Granville Stuart.

"I didn't just git the guts of it, but it's something Carrhart told him that made him mighty mad. Something about some one offering to lend Carrhart an extra gun when the two was shooting so wide and rotten."

Malin decided he would not have time to play poker. Yet he appeared loath to leave the store. He kept his eyes on the four-bit limit game, but what he was seeing was the man he believed to be his Nemesis. He beheld him in his cabin, oiling his big guns. He saw him boldly visiting the cabin on the slope. His eyes glared. It was too hideous. He jerked up his head and stared around through the smoke-fog. His wandering gaze quickened as it rested on one of Granville Stuart's Navy revolvers lying on a mound of bagged flour.

"Going, Bob?" asked Caven. "Thought you hankered for a game."

"Maybe I'll show you fellows how to play a game this evening," he replied with an attempt at his usual banter.

His progress up the slope was very slow. He walked like an old man, or as one carrying a heavy burden. When he entered the cabin he found Old Limpy sitting in his corner, his protruding eyes staring intently at the printed page of another book written by "that galoot, Dickens." Mrs. Malin greeted her husband fondly. He kissed her and smiled. Limpy came back to the world and Grasshopper Creek and rose to go. Malin requested:

"Stick along to keep Mrs. Malin company. I forgot something and must trot down after supper. Another plate, Annie."

During the meal Mrs. Malin furtively studied her husband. He was very quiet and boasted none of his trifling winnings at cribbage and poker. There was a caress in his voice when he spoke to her, and in the small mirror she detected him watching her in silent adoration. Her heart ached when she thought she beheld sadness in his gaze. He ate mechanically, as if performing a duty. She believed his mind was on something outside the cabin. She could not question him before the fiddler, but she did follow him to the door and anxiously whisper a query.

"Not a thing new, sweetheart. All's fine," he assured her.

At the foot of the slope he swung aside and did not enter Main Street.

THE Stuart brothers were alone in their store, as the frequenters had dispersed to eat their suppers.

"It's the kind of a game where a man must play his own game," Jim Stuart said.

"A mighty good citizen if we had law and order," replied Granville Stuart. "But he blew in a year or so too early."

Jim nodded and remarked:

"I've always held that when a man goes to the fightenest place on the map he ought to be a helpless cripple, like Old Limpy, or a master-hand with a gun like Henry Plummer or that George Ives. I've held to that notion ever since I come out here. Never a more likely young fellow, but plumb ignorant as to guns and knife-play, and too set in his ways to learn."

"When it comes to steel or lead he'd be helpless as a baby," agreed Granville Stuart. "He belongs where folks fight with their fists. You can't chip in to help him without hurting him."

Within an hour the loungers commenced sifting back into the store. Goodrich's saloon was filling up. Singing, the sound of various musical instruments and much loud talk and laughter emanated from the straggling street of cabins. By nine o'clock the men began leaving the store. After the last one had departed Granville applied himself to some rough-and-ready bookkeeping and made a list for Risley, the freighter, to bring back from Salt Lake. The shovels he had brought to town from Worden & Company's Gold Creek store were all gone at ten dollars apiece. The chewing-tobacco

was nearly cleaned out at fifteen dollars a pound. A pistol shot from the direction of Goodrich's place caused his brows to rise.

"Just some fun, or a killing?" he idly wondered as he continued his task.

The door behind him opened and shut quickly. It was the sudden closing of the door that caused him to jerk his head about and send his hand reaching for a gun.

Once he beheld the newcomer he relaxed and greeted:

"Hello, Bob. Late for a visit from you. Every one's gone home. But wait just a minute till I finish here and I'll show you more simon-pure cribbage than you ever see."

Malin nodded and crossed to the pile of bagged flour. Over his shoulder Stuart remarked—

"You breathe like you'd been running."

With a mighty effort to control his voice Malin replied:

"Lack of exercise. Getting soft."

He rapidly rubbed his boots on a bag and returned to the opposite side of the store and threw off his coat and hat.

"Heard the bark of a gun down the street. Just a bit of fun, eh?" mumbled Stuart as he finished a long column of figures.

The door flew open violently and George Ives stood on the threshold, scowling viciously, one hand hooked into the broad leather belt.

Stuart spun about and came to his feet. The newcomer's fierce gaze told him this was no casual visit. Stuart said—

"If you're coming in, kindly close the door, George."

Ignoring the request, Ives said to Malin—

"Get up and come outside—you!"

"Hi, what's all this mean?" demanded Stuart.

"Are you drunk or crazy?" asked Malin, his eyes opening wide as they watched the long fingers reaching for the butt of a gun.

"—— you!" panted Ives. "You tried to murder me!"

"You're a liar! Take off your gun and I'll knock you through the roof!"

Ives' eyes glittered. He became calm—a very dangerous symptom. His thin lips lifted and disclosed his teeth. He told Malin:

"I'm never man-handled. It ain't my style. You gave yourself away when you opened this door. I saw the streak of light. I knew I'd bag you here. On your feet, you yaller-belly, and outside!"

Stuart saw that Malin, in his shirt sleeves, had no weapons. He advanced and picked up the discarded coat. It contained no weapons. He told Ives—

"Hold your hosses, young feller, for a trifle." He walked back to the flour bags and started to pick up his own coat, changed his mind and demanded, "Now, Ives, what'n —— do you mean by this sort of acting up? Coming in here and telling an unarmed man to come out doors and be murdered?"

"I mean a cowardly dog tried to shoot me after I'd quit Goodrich's saloon," passionately answered Ives. "And this is the dog!" And he pointed a lean finger at Malin.

Malin, now pale, his eyes blazing as through a mask because of desperation replied, quietly, "For the second time I say you are a liar!"

Ives' gun slowly began leaving its holster. There was something horribly deadly in the movement. The gun seemed to be crawling inside the curled fingers of its own volition.

"None of that, Ives," warned Stuart, and his hand came up from the topmost bag of flour holding a long six-shooter. Ives' hand dropped to his side. He did not look at the storekeeper as he said—

"I don't go to bloody up your store, but that dog comes outside."

"No!"

Then Ives swung about and with two quick strides reached the bags, a lean hand on a gun. He warned:

"Stuart, you keep out of this! It ain't your game. That man goes outside, or dies here!"

"Take his gun away from him, Gran,

and I'll kill him with my hands," begged Malin.

"Bob, you keep shut! Ives, Malin stays here. I'm going outside with you."

"I'm fetching no fight to you, Stuart. But this man tried to murder me."

"You've made a big mistake. You're hunting the man you think took a shot at you. Some skunk's been stealing from my lean-to outside. He had the nerve to try it tonight, with both Malin and me here. Malin was waiting for me to finish my work to have a game of crib. I heard the noise. I crept to the door and stepped outside. I saw, as I believed, the thief hurrying down the street. I lammed a hunk of lead after him. He seemed to disappear. I waited. It was me you saw opening the door to come inside. Sorry for the mistake. How'll you take it out—in lead or in my explanation?"

Ives grinned and requested—

"Just shove the muzzle of that gun under my nose so's I can smell of it."

"Sure." And Stuart lifted the gun. A sniff and a glance and Ives was laughing silently. Then he told Stuart:

"Why try that game on me? Your gun is fully loaded and it hasn't been fired recently. You might have reloaded it, but you never had time to clean it."

Stuart was nonplussed, but his years on the border had trained him to show no emotion.

"Reloaded but not cleaned. Your smeller is out of order," he said as he casually tipped the gun and beheld that all the chambers were filled.

Ives stepped back and said:

"You win this particular pot, Stuart. I'm taking it out in explanations, not lead."

He spun about and started for the door. Stuart called after him:

"Ives, if you ever try any gun-play on my friend and as an excuse claim he tried to shoot you in the back, I'll see that you fill the end of a rope. I always keep my word."

Ives' face was pale as he glared murderously at Stuart, then at Malin. Fighting down his ferocious temper he said:

"Then it comes to this: I can't defend myself against this man without running into a mob and a rope?"

"I'm not Malin's keeper. I'm not packing his troubles," shortly replied Stuart. "I'm talking about what you say happened tonight."

Ives bowed and went out, closing the door gently behind him. From the window Stuart watched him swing down the street, a blur of a human figure until it passed through a bar of light showing from a window, when Ives became as deadly a menace as ever infested the crime-ridden Montana camps. Stuart faced about, and fixed his angry gaze on Malin:

"You took this gun from under my coat on the flour bags. You went out tonight to bag Ives. When he came in and I found you'd returned the gun I believed you'd made two of the biggest mistakes a man could make. I believed you'd worked yourself up to shooting a man in the back and then had made the mighty big mistake of missing your target. But this —— gun is loaded and the barrel hasn't been fouled. Now what does this all mean?"

Staring helplessly and hopelessly at the rough floor Malin confessed:

"I took the gun. I planned to kill him. Perkins said Ives was staying here to kill me. His threat to do that gave me the right to shoot at sight. I had him under the gun—I couldn't have missed. He was within ten feet of me when he quit the saloon, But I couldn't bring myself to shoot even Ives down in that fashion. He won't fight my way. I don't know how to fight his way. But he can abuse me until my self-respect compels me to resent his insults. Then he'll murder me. It will be murder just as much as if I had shot him from behind tonight."

"You planned it and found you couldn't do it," repeated Stuart.

"That's it. Probably a fool. But to kill, without giving a man a chance. I

couldn't. I thought I could, because of Annie."

"I understand, Bob. I'm glad you couldn't bring yourself to do it. Ives goes to Carrhart's ranch tomorror or next day. As soon as he has gone you be ready to pull out. The roads are passable. I'll see you have the cash for your claim to take along. This is no place for you. If you face him you'll get killed, if you don't, you'll lose your self-respect, which is worse'n death."

"We'll go," said Malin, and he rose and put on his coat and walked to the door.

Suddenly Stuart was remembering.

"Bob!" he cried. Malin listlessly wheeled to face him. "But there was a shot. You didn't fire. Who did?"

Malin's eyes blinked as this angle of the case was brought to his attention. He shook his head and said:

"I heard a shot, but I had turned back behind the saloon and was almost at the store before it was fired. I didn't give it much thought, I was that stirred up, and because one is always hearing shots in this camp. I waited a few minutes outside the store to quiet my nerves."

Stuart frowned in perplexity. Then he dismissed the matter by saying:

"The shot probably wasn't meant for Ives—just happened to fit in. But he'll never believe it. Pull out when I give the word."

IVES rode away with Carrhart and the Malins carried out their plans of departure so secretly that even Limpy Kansas, although much at the cabin, never suspected his friends were leaving Bannack until the last evening before their departure. That night he did something unusual for him. Without being invited, he returned to the cabin. Mrs. Malin was packing some personal effects. He stared reproachfully. She burst into nervous weeping and told him:

"Yes, Limpy, we're going back home. No one must know. Bob will give you a writing so you can keep this cabin and all that's in it."

"Missus Malin, this place will be filled with ghosts after you pull out," he replied huskily. "And you couldn't trust even me?"

"I was going to stop at your cabin and say good-by. You've been a good neighbor and friend, Limpy," said Mrs. Malin.

"If you don't want this hut I'll leave you a stake, a good one, Limpy," spoke up Malin, and his fingers fumbled at the heavy money-belt.

The old fiddler raised a protesting hand and begged:

"Take me along with you as far as the Oregon road. It's the only kindness you can do for me. Not that I deserve any. But I won't be any bother. Nothing to take with me except my fiddle and the case."

"Perhaps you don't understand," Malin explained. "We've kept our going a secret so we won't run into any trouble. I'm carrying quite a treasure." And he patted the heavy money belt.

"A mighty big treasure," muttered the old man, his bulging gaze turning to Mrs. Malin's pretty face. "And if word gits to that bloody Ives and his gang—Just a lift to the Oregon road. I won't be any bother. I ain't as hefty as I look. Just bones and hide."

"You shall go with us, Limpy," suddenly decided Mrs. Malin. "You shall go the whole distance. To New Hampshire."

"Just to the Oregon road," he mumbled "God knows I'd love to go clear through, but I'd be a nuisance."

"Well, since Mrs. Malin seems to have decided it you'll meet us at the wagon back of Stuart's store before sunrise," broke in Malin.

His wife explained:

"We start before folks wake up. For two days Granville Stuart has told he is sending a wagon away for goods. His brother will keep out of sight for a day. Folks will think he's gone with the wagon to Deer Lodge."

After Limpy left them Malin gently chided his wife for cumbering themselves with the cripple; also for telling him of their departure.

"The old man may stop in a saloon for a drink and get to babbling," he added.

"He's been a good and loyal friend. Don't fret."

That night Malin persisted in imagining situations that would have been laughable if not for his very obvious mental torment. Ives had friends in town. Just one careless word, and a swift rider would make Carrhart's ranch where Ives and several of his kind were staying. Mrs. Malin also was uneasy, and there was but little sleep in the cabin that night.

The morning was gray and threatened rain. After a hurried meal the two slipped from the house, taking only what Malin could pack along on his stout shoulders. They left a fire burning so the neighbors would see the usual morning smoke. By the time they reached the foot of the slope Mrs. Malin was worrying lest the fuel in the fireplace be consumed before the Cavens and others were up. A lack of smoke would bring them to the cabin to learn whether the couple were ill. Malin refused to pass down the empty street, but swung wide to approach the wagon from the rear of the store. Limpy, with his fiddle-case was there waiting for them. They were ahead of the horses. There came the fear to Malin that Stuart had overslept.

Then through the dull light came the four horses, harnessed and led by Granville Stuart. The animals were hitched up and Stuart shook hands with the three and said:

"Good-by and good luck. Wish you folks would come back after this crick gits decent."

An expression of gratitude, a final hand-clasp, and the outfit started. Mrs. Malin insisted on driving the first few miles, as she feared her husband's impatience might attract the attention of some early riser.

With his fiddle-case beside him and his legs hanging out the end of the covered wagon Limpy watched the road behind. When they had passed the last house and rounded a bend Malin muttered—

"Thank God, we're off at last!"

The clouds threatened rain for the first five miles. Then the sun began riddling the depressing canopy with spears of gold. The sullen roof became a sea of blue dotted with fleecy islands. Malin's spirits rose. But Mrs. Malin frowned as her gaze rested on the distant peaks, her "bad old men with white hair."

The road led up a mile-long ravine. The horses covered it at slow pace. When they were about to commence the down grade Limpy called out—

"Missus Malin, five or six men on hosses will overhaul us pretty soon."

Malin was now driving. He cracked the long whip and sent the horses down the grade at a break-neck pace. Bouncing up and down, his teeth clicking over his words, Limpy warned:

"Slower! Slower! You can't run away from men on horses! What's gnawing you? You'll see lots of hossmen. Those fellers didn't come from Bannack. Just happened to cut into the road from some ranch."

As they finished the descent Malin managed to rein the team down to a walk. He leaned out but could not get a good view of the road behind.

"What's it look like now?" he asked anxiously.

"Now it looks more businesslike," answered Limpy. "There's an even half dozen of 'em. They're coming down the grade like the —— chasing eagles. May be all right, but they seem to be in a dreadful hurry. But you can't run away from them."

"By heavens, Annie! They've outgamed us!" passionately cried Malin.

Her face was ghostly as her awful fear became a conviction. She had a thought for young Guy, for poor George Edwards. She told her husband, wearily. "It does no good to use the whip, Bob. You're simply telling them we're trying to run away."

"And I even left the short-barreled revolver behind!" he groaned.

"They may be strangers. If they're after us it's because the sale of the claim has leaked out and they want your belt,"

said his wife. And again she was remembering the fate of those who left Bannack City with any money on their persons.

"They're slowing down," called out the fiddler. "Just keeping the same distance."

"Then they're not interested in us, Limpy," rejoined Mrs. Malin.

Limpy could not torture her with what he believed to be the truth. Malin was quick to guess it. He blurted out—

"Holding back just to pick a good place!"

"Oh, my dear! My dear! Have we come to this?" his wife sobbed faintly.

Limpy said:

"Hold up and draw to one side. They won't dare to try anything so near town. After they pass us we can turn and drive back to Bannack."

Malin followed this advice. Limpy promptly reported:

"They've halted. One man's fixing his saddle. Another's looking at his hoss' feet. They won't pass us. They ain't ready yet."

"But what shall we do, Limpy?" cried Mrs. Malin.

"One of two things, Missus Malin," promptly replied the fiddler. "Either turn and drive back, like they weren't there, or stick here beside the road until some honest people come along."

"There may not be another wagon out or into Bannack for a week. We can't go back. We'll go ahead," Malin hoarsely told his wife.

"Drive on, dear," she agreed. "I never want to see that place again."

Limpy endeavored to argue, but Malin gave him no heed. He sent the team on at a smart gallop.

They were crossing a wide creek bottom, with the road disappearing in a gulch ahead, when the fiddler warned:

"They're coming! They're keeping about the same distance. Mebbe they think we're armed. If you can git into the gulch ahead I'll try to bluff 'em while you and the Missus sneak up and hide in the rocks."

"God only knows how you can bluff them, Limpy, but our only chance is to take to the rocks," agreed Malin. "They can't stay and hunt for us very long."

And with a crack of the long whip he quickly lifted the four horses into a furious gallop.

"We can't make it!" bellowed Limpy. "Rein to one side. They're coming hellytilarrup!"

And now the quick thudding of fleet hoofs advertised the fast approach of the horsemen. Limpy repeated his advice, but Malin could perceive no sense in being thus accommodating. He swung his whip more savagely. Suddenly the leader of the horsemen darted ahead of his companions and swung wide to the right of the wagon and began firing at the horses. The off wheel-horse threw up his head, screamed and went down. The team swung at a right angle to the road and cramped the wheels. Malin was hurled among the rocks as his wife shot from the seat, falling unconscious in the road. Limpy, tenaciously clutching his violin-case, bounced high and came down in the road in a sitting posture.

With the game bagged, the horsemen reduced their speed. George Ives, who had fired on the team, cantered up, blowing the smoke from his gun. He gave no heed to Limpy. He called back to his followers:

"Scotty, see if you can get that horse up, so you can drive the outfit into the gulch and send it flying down the first steep grade. Bilson, get that man across Scotty's horse. Tie him on if he's alive. Take him back half a mile from the road and leave him. He isn't to show up again. I'll take the pretty baggage."

"What about the old cuss?" asked Scotty as he slipped from his mount.

"Belt him over the head with your gun. Throw him inside the wagon. No witnesses."

Limpy Kansas blinked, his fingers fumbling with the fiddle-case. Scotty came forward very businesslike, only he intended using his knife instead of a gun barrel. When within three feet of his

victim he froze in his tracks and an awful light beat in on his black mind. The fiddle-case was open and the dark-veined hands were grasping two of the largest revolvers the villain ever had seen —Colt's forty-sevens, each weighing four pounds.

He opened his mouth to scream an alarm. The *boom* of the fiddler's right-hand gun brought every man to attention with a jolt, with the exception of Scotty, who went down, minus the top of his head.

With yells of rage the men on each side of the wagon, two mounted, two afoot, raced back, shooting through the spokes of the wheels at the bowed figure of the cripple. Limpy coughed, almost apologetically, lurched to one side, and commenced firing with both guns. The first mounted man to round the end of the wagon had his weapon half-raised when the huge ball caught him under the chin.

Rolling his protruding eyes from side to side, the fiddler blended the remaining shots into a roaring volley. Ives, at the front of the wagon and busy with lifting the woman across his horse, was amazed by the thunderous shots, and doubly amazed to behold his followers tumbling over like wooden figures. Within a count of six from the time the cripple fired his first shot Ives found himself the sole survivor. Dropping on his knees, he fired one shot at the bowed back, and while in that position glimpsed horsemen racing up to the rescue. Springing to his feet he fled at a mad gallop. He fired but one shot at Malin's still figure, and missed.

Limpy slumped forward but did not release his grip on the big guns. He tried to lift his head as he heard the yells of encouragement down the road.

The pounding hoofs came to a halt and several citizens from Bannack leaped to the ground and exclaimed in horror at the terrible spectacle.

"Mrs. Malin is all right—just knocked senseless!" cried Jim Stuart.

"Malin ain't any worse hurt," called out another.

"Malin hasn't any gun. Leaping jumps! Old Limpy must a killed all these ——!" gasped Jeff Perkins.

Up came the big bald head very slowly. The protruding eyes seemed to be making a last count of the dead. Limpy tried to lift the big guns, but they were too heavy. He told the gaping Bannack men faintly:

"Best fight I ever had. The first since I was killed in '52."

"Mind's wandering," said Perkins.

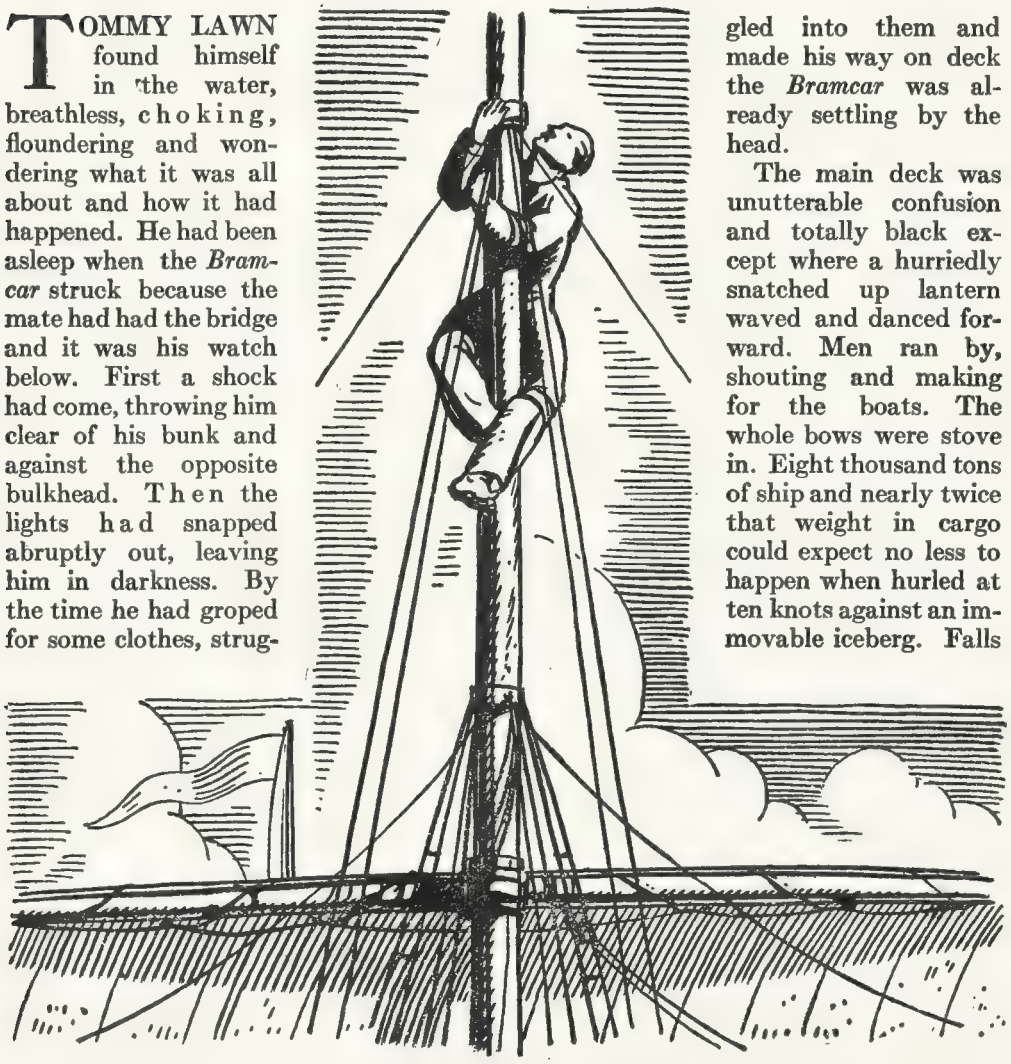
"No. Just cashing for good this time," corrected the fiddler. "Hear this: I'm Old Hart. Name on my guns. Add five notches to 'em. Bury 'em with me. Never reckoned I had a fight in me after I was crippled in Salt Lake— Good fight. Ives got behind me. —— coward! I tried to pot him one night, back in Bannack. He was pestering Missus Malin— Never knew why I missed that time—"

And he leaned against the wheel, his head tilted back, his dead eyes placidly staring at the blue heavens.

By the time the Malins had recovered their senses and could understand all that had happened George Ives was several miles away, riding madly, riding closer to the edge of life and the hangman's noose.

*The Strange Adventure OF TOMMY LAWN

TOMMY LAWN found himself in the water, breathless, choking, floundering and wondering what it was all about and how it had happened. He had been asleep when the *Bramcar* struck because the mate had had the bridge and it was his watch below. First a shock had come, throwing him clear of his bunk and against the opposite bulkhead. Then the lights had snapped abruptly out, leaving him in darkness. By the time he had groped for some clothes, struggled into them and made his way on deck the *Bramcar* was already settling by the head.



The main deck was unutterable confusion and totally black except where a hurriedly snatched up lantern waved and danced forward. Men ran by, shouting and making for the boats. The whole bows were stove in. Eight thousand tons of ship and nearly twice that weight in cargo could expect no less to happen when hurled at ten knots against an immovable iceberg. Falls

A Tale of the Great Divide of the Sailormen

By

ALBERT RICHARD WETJEN

squeaked and whined. There was a rattling of oars. Luckily the sea was not rough. Boats smacked cleanly into the water and then the long, cold swells began to sweep the sinking steamer. Tommy Lawn was racing for the fiddley, rather bewildered, when his feet seemed to dissolve under him, a dark green and noisy Mother Sea put her arms about him and overside he went.

He struggled mightily to swear—which is a thing all good sailors do—but the icy shock had taken his breath and was setting his limbs on fire until they slowly began to numb, and he found to his startled surprize that he could kick out no longer. He managed to yell then, but he was entirely alone in the dark and water slapped into his face. He thought he heard the hard, laboring sound of oars in rowlocks but he was not certain. He rose and sank mightily on a swell. Lights blurred before his eyes, revolved, growing to a red and then a purple shade, eventually all turning to black. He felt some one touch him on the shoulder—

"We didn't expect you so soon," said a voice, "but we'll find room."

Tommy Lawn looked round and saw a somewhat stout, red-faced man with white side-whiskers and kindly blue eyes. He was very much tanned and had thin gold rings in his ears. He was naked from the waist up and from the waist down he wore thick pants of a somewhat dark material, the bottoms thrust into leather sea-boots that rose half-way up his thighs. His back and chest was strangely tattooed with flying dragons, ships, women and hairy looking men. A queer Chinese sort of snake started at his wrists and wound up each arm, disappearing suddenly over the shoulder blades. His fingers were tattooed with rings and on the back of each hand was an anchor. He wore a sort of floppy sou'wester with the strings hanging loosely down, and he looked so barbarously queer that Tommy said, "I beg your pardon," and felt quite embarrassed.

"Name an' rank?" asked the stranger, and he spat tobacco juice at a little blue fish that came too near. "There was a mistake over your ship, I must allow. She wasn't due t' hit until next year—Name *an'* rank?"

"I'm Tommy Lawn, second mate of the *Bramcar*," answered Tommy very bewildered.

"An officer gentleman," the stranger nodded. "I'm Ben the Bosun. I 'as t' meet you all an' show you the way."

"The way?"

"Oh, aye! I takes so many young gentlemen I forgets they're strangers, New 'Ands. Why Fiddlers' Green to be sure—I 'ad an old gent from a bark outa Iquique only yesterday. She ran foul of a reef off'n Diego Ramirez. 'E was most insistent that I was wrong. Didn't want no Fiddlers' Green. Said 'e wanted t' see Davy Jones 'isself an' make 'is own arrangements. I'd been telling 'im about the Green an' 'e said 'e didn't 'old with sich goings on. 'Course, 'e couldn't make no change. He was eligible, an' th' Old Man booked him for an Albatross and the Green. But 'e was an obstinate old gent.

"We don't get many sich down 'ere now since th' clippers went outa fashion. Wore a white beard and one o' them low,

pointed stiff collars. When Jimmylegs showed 'im the Locker 'e wasn't s' set on seeing Davy Jones though."

Ben the Bosun chuckled and spat tobacco juice again, for the little blue fish had come back.

"I'm afraid I'm rather muddled," said Tommy Lawn, looking helplessly about and wondering where all the pale green light was coming from. Ben the Bosun had taken him by the arm and was hurrying him downward by long trailing weeds and shoals of fish that stopped and watched them with unmoving goggle eyes.

"Tchk! I was forgetting again. Well, t' explain, it's th' rule that skippers wot've run their craft well and true and treated their men fair, goes an' gets an Albatross. An 'all 'ands wot 'ave the same qualifications are free o' Fiddlers' Green. Davy Jones don't bother with 'em."

"Where's the rest of my crowd?" said Tommy Lawn. He was beginning to feel rather lonely and he had an idea that Ben the Bosun wasn't quite right in the head.

"They was all in the boats last I seen of them. 'Cepting two of the stoke'old 'ands. We don't 'andle them though. They goes to the North Pole where there's fires. Casey Jones looks after them. He's Davy's brother— We did used t' bring 'em t' the Green when they 'ad boats 'alf square-rigged an' 'alf steam, but there was a mutiny after a bit because they wanted t' run a bulk'ead down fore and aft through the Green and take the port side. So Casey fixed up a place t' accommodate them an' the Old Man was right pleased.'

"You mean I'm the only one lost?" asked Tommy mournfully. "That's tough, you know. I was going to be mate next trip and get married. What'll my girl say?"

"There's the Daughters at the Green," Ben the Bosun assured him. "Lots of girls. You won't be lonesome." He wagged his head and laughed until the thin gold earrings swung and shook. "It's ships an' the sea you'll worry about. They allus do. But your Gull'll bring you th' news."

"Do I have to be a Gull?" Tommy remembered that he had heard that dead sailors became sea-gulls and his heart became more mournful than ever.

"Not so to speak." Ben the Bosun spat once again and caught the little blue fish neatly in the eye so that it went away shouting something that sounded rather obscene. "But we found that none o' you gentlemen—an' the focsle 'ands for that matter—could stop worrying about wot was going on aloft. Seemed like you allus wanted t' know wot ships was sailing, an' from where, an' where to. Wanted t' know in general wot was doing on salt water. There was a lot o' breaking out at nights because o' that an' men and women aloft wus getting scared outa their wits, an' Old Nick made a complaint that being scared they was actin' too good fer 'is business. The Old Man decided then t' arrange fer all skippers, wot was eligible, to 'ave an Albatross, and th' rest wot's eligible t' 'ave a Gull. If your papers are good you'll get a Stormy Petrel. They goes farthest and see most. If your papers ain't so good you'll get mebbe a Puffin or something wot don't travel much. Some of 'em only get Penguins, an' that's a crooel 'ardship, I c'n tell you."

Tommy was about to ask further questions when he found he was walking on a broad stretch of sand from which bushes of weed and tall slender green flowers grew and waved as if in some gentle breeze. There were fish too, of course, swinging around all the time and once a big fat crab waved his pincers and said hoarsely—

"Is he eligible?"

"Go away," said Tommy's guide, squirting tobacco juice, and the crab made rude noises with his mouth and scuttled behind a moss-covered rock.

"What does he mean?" Tommy asked plaintively. "What does he want to know?"

Ben the Bosun coughed deep in his throat and shook his head.

"Them wot's got bad papers—too bad even for the Locker—gets shut outa th' Green an' all. The Locker's where them goes wot 'as papers pretty bad. But the real bad 'uns don't get anywhere an' they wanders up an' about till the crabs an' eels get 'em. If they're real, awful wicked Old Nick will send for 'em, but we ain't got th' same idees as Old Nick an' some we turns out 'e thinks are too good fer 'im."

"Oh, I see," said Tommy Lawn and felt a little sick, wondering whether his papers were good enough.

"Here we are," said Ben the Bosun at last and they stopped before a huge bulkhead that rose up in the pale greenness farther than the eye could reach. Confronting them was a door and over it a bell and at each side of the door there was a big port. Ben the Bosun reached for the long lanyard and struck the bell eight times and Tommy saw engraved on it *The Noah.* Ben the Bosun explained it was called that because Noah had been the first to polish it, which was a thing all New Hands had to do after being found eligible.

One of the ports opened, and a seamed, leather-colored face with a patch over one eye looked out and roared—

"What d'ye want?"

"Here's a New Hand," answered Ben the Bosun. "Open up an' be right smart about it." The other rumbled something deep in his throat and closed the port.

"He was a Pirate under Lafitte," whispered Ben the Bosun hoarsely. "Don't like me at all. Some o' the Pirates we didn't dare let in for fear they'd sack th' place an' run off with the Daughters. Old Nick took most of 'em. But he was better than most an' so 'e was allowed just inside th' door an' given th' berth permanent when the previous doorman 'ad resigned."

The door opened at last and the Pirate stood with one foot on the brass storm step and stared at Tommy Lawn suspiciously. Tommy noted with a shiver that he held a great scarred cutlas in one hand and had a most bloodthirsty look in his remaining eye.

"Name *and* rank!" he bellowed at last.

"Tommy Lawn, second mate of the *Bramcar*," Tommy managed to say. The other scowled so that Tommy added hastily, "I hadn't time to get my uniform on."

The Pirate jerked a strip of parchment from his belt, stared at it for a moment and then shook his head.

"You ain't down fer today." He looked suspicious and felt his cutlas edge with one gnarled thumb.

"A year before time," Ben the Bosun explained, squirting tobacco juice aside. "I'll answer for 'im. Th' *Bramcar* struck afore time."

The Pirate grunted, stared at Tommy a while longer and jerked his head and stood out of the doorway. Ben the Bosun and Tommy stepped inside. The door slammed shut.

"If it ain't so there'll be some as walk th' plank," promised the Pirate darkly as he followed the two of them down a long gangway until they came to another door with a big brass ring-handle. The Pirate stopped here, breathed forth some other blood-curdling threats and then slowly retraced his steps.

" 'E mustn't come any farther," explained Ben the Bosun. "If 'e 'ad a real good look into th' Green 'e'd like go an' see 'is chums at Old Nick's place and lead 'em back 'ere for th' loot. Old Nick can 'ardly hold 'em as it is— This is the Old Man's room."

He knocked on the door and then quietly opened it and went in with Tommy treading apprehensively at his heels. They were in a wide, low room with beams, like the timbers of an ancient ship, running over bulkheads and deckhead. There was a great table piled high with charts. There was another great table piled high with books. And there was a smaller table behind which sat in a great chair an old, old man. Tommy did not remember having ever seen such an old looking man before. His snowy beard reached to his waist, his hair far

down over his shoulders. But his eyes were so blue and young that Tommy took heart and did not feel very much afraid.

On the table near the old man's right hand there sat a small whale which the old man was feeding from a bag he had hidden in a drawer. He looked up when Ben the Bosun stepped forward, with Tommy at his side, and the whale shuffled off the table and went and hid in a corner.

"That's th' Green's pet," whispered Ben the Bosun aside. "And this 's the Old Man of the Sea. 'E 'olds an' extra-extra-master's ticket, the only one there is an' 'e's very proud. Call 'im sir an' don't argue. 'E's awful touchy about 'is navigation."

"Name *and* rank!" roared the Old Man of the Sea and Tommy squeaked the necessary reply.

"Where's the log?" roared the Old Man of the Sea, and a quick, handsome youth with a pigtail and dressed in a midshipman's uniform darted from behind the table where the charts lay, picked up one, ran to the table of books, picked up one of these also and brought the both to the Old Man of the Sea.

He spread the chart out before him and turned the pages of the log.

"Humph!" growled the Old Man at last and glared at Tommy Lawn. Then he moved his forefinger over the chart, glared again and turned to Ben the Bosun.

"He's ahead of time," he said very sternly. "Bad discipline somewhere. The *Bramcar* wasn't to hit until next year."

"That's wot I said, sir," answered Ben the Bosun respectfully. "Soon as I 'eard I made a complaint but it weren't no good. Since the *Primus* an' the *Hungarian* went down Casey Jones said 'e 'ad too many firemen come in afore 'e 'ad time t' make room, an' the fires got too 'ot, so 'is engineer gentlemen couldn't 'old the ice, they being short-'anded an' not 'aving any new men in for some time."

"Arrange for that at once," snapped the Old Man of the Sea, turning to the little midshipman. "A couple of engine-room staffs will do. We can't have that ice coming down before time. The *Kronstadt* and the *Ariel* are due to strike t'morrow. See the firemen get away but don't lose the engineers— Have the storekeeper send four teams of whales up north ready for the new men to start work with."

"Yes, sir," piped the midshipman. "But the *Ariel's* a brig and carries no engine-room staff."

"—— my eyes!" roared the Old Man of the Sea. "—— my eyes! Cross her off then. We're overmanned now and a rest'll do her good. Give her another year— Humph! There's the *Prince Rupert* due to founder next week. She'll do."

"Yes, sir," piped the midshipman again and he made a note in a little book he drew from his pocket. The Old Man of the Sea bent over the chart.

"Humph! I don't know as we can accommodate you, you being a year ahead. Your papers seem to be in order. There's a question mark here opposite the wreck of the *Grosvenor*. It was a foggy night and dark and the recorder couldn't see very well. You were on the bridge. What happened?"

"A ship named the *Constantine Pearl* rammed us, sir," answered Tommy. "I saw her in time and put my helm hard a-starboard. But her officer made a mistake. His name was Lansing and they suspended his ticket for being drunk."

"Lansing? Lansing?" The Old Man frowned. He turned to Ben the Bosun and said, "Has he been here?"

"Drowned off Bermuda, sir. Drunk an' washed overboard. Special job undertook by the Great West Drift because o' complaints to th' Deep Sea Board of Wind, Wave and Tide that 'e'd killed two seamen without cause an' constant imperilled 'is ship."

"Ah, I remember," said the Old Man, nodding so that his white hair shook. "We turned him out."

"The crabs complained he was terrible

sour, sir," Ben the Bosun added. "Sort of alcoholically pickled, as I might say. There was a school of 'em drunk an' singing outside the door all that night."

"Humph!" said the Old Man of the Sea. He shut the log book with a snap. "Nothing to talk about in your career, young man. No sign of a desperate adventure or a great piece of navigation. Humph! Now pay attention!"

He poked a large and bony forefinger in the direction of Tommy's chest and barked, in exactly the manner of a dyspeptic marine examiner:

"Yourshipisintherighthandsemi-circleof aSouthernHemispherecyclone———" he paused for breath—"runningwiththewind aftwhatchangewouldyouexpectinthewind and weather?" He finished with a roar, "*Andstatethereason!*"

"I don't know," stammered the confused Tommy, trying vainly to dissect the question and remember the rules of cyclonic storms.

The Old Man lifted his eyebrows in vast contempt, exactly like a marine examiner.

"No—you—don't know," he said. His finger shot out again. "I'd like to know what the sea's coming to— Take him away!" Ben the Bosun caught Tommy's arm. "Passed. Eligible. Have him marked down for Stormy Petrel. Fiddlers' Green."

"Come on," whispered Ben the Bosun. "You're through. I've got to be off an' pick up a skipper and mate near Lowestoft. My watch mate 'andles th' focsle 'ands. Cheerio."

He drew Tommy away from before the table, left him standing by the bulkhead and then went off, rolling toward the door through which they had come. Tommy could hear him arguing with the Pirate outside before the door shut and some one touched his arm. He turned to find the midshipman beside him and the youngster piped—

"This way, sir."

They went out through another door, after Tommy had bowed to the Old Man of the Sea, who was laughing and rubbing his hands and only said, "Humph!" and Tommy found himself in another gangway that ended in a small square room where the bulkheads were crowded with brooms, holystones, buckets, mops, ropes, odd pieces of canvas, blocks, hooks, tackles, spare spars, oars, cutlases, axes, sea-boots, oilskins and a hundred other articles belonging to ships.

"Don't worry over the Old Man's ways," whispered the midshipman. "He always remembers how he was examined before he had his first ship—and that was longer ago than I've heard of. He makes up questions now and fires them off so that he can see what he must have looked like when he was being asked himself."

Tommy nodded, understanding, and then found himself facing a tall, gaunt individual who sat on a three-legged stool smoking a short thick pipe and was dressed in a dark uniform that was much too big for him. He had a large Adam's apple and his face was very sour looking.

"Second mate. Eligible," piped the midshipman. "Marked for a Stormy Petrel and Fiddlers' Green. Usual articles." Then in Tommy's ear again, "This's Jimmylegs the first mate. He was at Salamis with Themistocles and is a hard case. He can send you to the Locker for a spell if you don't behave."

"Come here," rumbled the first mate, and Tommy stepped obediently forward while the little midshipman scuttled away. "We bred 'em tougher in my day, but times have changed. You can do the brasswork afterward. I'll show you 'round first."

He rose to his gaunt, astonishing height, with all his bones snapping and cracking. He put his pipe away. He stared at Tommy, frowning darkly for a moment, and then with a grunt stalked off. Tommy followed him, half-running, taking two steps to the lank man's one.

They went along another dimly lighted gangway with a few hurricane lanterns swinging from the deckhead and at last stopped before a long opening in the bulkhead closed with a grill. Tommy peered

within, and there was such a noise, such a shuffling, rustling, squawking, crying, screaming, grating pandemonium that he thought he had come to the Bottom of the World where all the Utterly Lost Souls are. But when he looked a bit more closely he saw it was only birds making all that noise, millions of birds hopping and flying and quarreling, walking over weedy rocks and scratching on the sand floor of a vast cavern. And coming toward Jimmylegs and Tommy through the feathery, noisy clouds was an old, old woman with long straggly hair. Tommy regarded her with some awe as she neared the grating.

Her nose and chin almost met, and for a staff she carried a creamy, long, wavy narwhal tusk. Her clothes were in rags and she hobbled almost as if crippled, but her dark eyes were the wisest Tommy had ever seen and there was a sweet set to her lips that reminded him of his mother. He heard Jimmylegs say—

"She was here before the Old Man of the Sea. She can go anywhere and has right of wind, wave and tide. She is a Great Legend and that's as high as any one can go."

"What's her name?" whispered Tommy, very awed, and fiddling with his cap which he carried in his hands.

"Mother Carey," said Jimmylegs. And then loudly, "Ah, how are you, Mother? This one's marked for a Stormy Petrel. Eligible. Fiddlers' Green. Usual articles."

"What does usual articles mean?" Tommy inquired while Mother Carey was looking him over.

"Means you're signed on as an ordinary guest. You've done nothing special. No favors to be granted."

"Oh," said Tommy and felt quite ashamed because he had never done a thing in his sea life to entitle him to special articles.

"A handsome young man," said Mother Carey at last in a high-pitched sweet voice, almost like a bird's in fact. "A most handsome man. He is like that young Spanish captain who was brought from Cadiz—before the Armada wasn't it— Coaxed and wheedled and persuaded me to let him in, and he had an Albatross, two Puffins and at least a dozen Stormy Petrels marked and set free before I could stop him. A great rascal. It took my good Sea Eagles weeks before we had him cut to his regular one Albatross— No, young man," as Tommy began to smile, "I'm not to be coaxed again. But since you are young and handsome and I am a woman—very old though—you shall have a strong little bird, one of the best."

She clucked quickly with a peculiar note, and out of the squalling pandemonium behind her there came, true as an arrow to her shoulder, a little Stormy Petrel, bright-eyed, sooty-black all over. Mother Carey fumbled in the folds of her dress and brought forth two little pieces of white cardboard and handed them through the grating.

"Write down your name," said Jimmylegs, in a little more friendly tone, "and any special place you'd like to get news from."

He handed Tommy a pencil then and Tommy thought hard. He put down his name and started to write Mile End Road, London, which was where his girl lived. But because he was a sailor, and girls died sooner or later, he wrote instead in big printed capitals, "The English Channel," and handed the little white cards back. Mother Carey carefully fastened one each side of the Stormy Petrel's body, near his tail, and then clucked again and the bird went flying from her. It soared up and up, circling to the room of the cavern and then went right out of sight.

"There," said Mother Carey, laughing, "it's gone to be born. And when it's a full-grown Stormy Petrel it'll have a white patch of feathers just in those places where I put your cards." She thumped the sand once or twice with her narwhal tusk staff. "Heigho! All you young gentlemen start to put down the place where some woman lives but you always end by writing of some part of the sea. And now, young man, when you are enjoying yourself at the Green and

something starts aching inside you and you want to know what ships are coming and going and what the weather is doing on salt water, you just send one of the Passengers to Cape Horn and he'll bring you back all the news your bird has."

"I'm much obliged, ma'am," said the grateful Tommy politely and backed away with Jimmylegs beside him. Mother Carey clucked then, and all her birds came round her in a great cloud, silent as ghosts, and Tommy saw her no more.

JIMMYLEGS took him back down the gangway then, and they turned aside into a gloomy place that looked like a ship's main hold, a great stuffy hold with the hatches battened down above. There were only a few hurricane lanterns burning, lashed against the stanchions and casting shadows everywhere. From all around there was a confusion of noises, clink of metal on metal, rubbing sounds, scrapings, groans, cries, a few oaths, a lot of grumbling, the dull swish of sand on wood. Tommy looked up and saw that exactly as over a great ship's hold there were two decks above him. Jimmylegs stalked into the shadows under the deck immediately overhead and pointed at a long row of men, who were half buried in wide manholes. These men were on their knees scooping something up with their bare hands and putting it in buckets.

"These are the men who deserted their ships, masters and A. B.'s together. They're cleaning water tanks and bilges, and their buckets have no bottoms. They work watch and watch and sleep in a focsle where the sea washes about all the time keeping their bunks wet and a man stands inside the doorway shouting out 'All hands on deck!' so they can not sleep. Once a week they get a day off to do their washing. They used to be allowed to visit the Green once a year but that caused trouble there because they were always trying to get every one to desert. The Old Man complained to Davy Jones about it so now they don't get their day."

"What place is this then?" asked the interested Tommy, very glad that he had never deserted his ship.

"This is the Locker, Davy Jones' Locker," replied Jimmylegs. "In the 'tween decks are the mutineers chipping rust with hammers of rubber. They still get their day at the Green every year. And up in the shelter deck are men who disobeyed orders constantly, were careless with their work and committed other small crimes. They holystone all the week except Saturdays and Sundays when they go out and get some more sand. Come on up and we'll see Davy Jones."

They climbed up three heights of iron ladder, past the decks where the mutineers were chipping rust with rubber hammers and the men of smaller crimes were eternally holystoning, and so up to the main deck above which was reached through a small scuttle.

"There was a lot of trouble when the Old Locker was torn down," commented Jimmylegs as they scrambled on to the widest hatch Tommy had ever seen. "The Old Locker was taken from an Alexandrian slave galley and wasn't a hold at all. It served for a time, but as our workers piled up it got too small and the Deep Sea Board of Wind, Wave and Tide declared it unsanitary. It did smell a bit. After some consultation this new place was decided on. The workers who'd been sailing-ship men got quite excited and claimed they'd been insulted. Said their privileges were being taken away. It caused quite a fuss at the time and there was some grounds for it because no one likes to be changed from a wooden hull to an iron one. I know, being a wooden-hulled man m'self. Even the Green was disturbed about it."

"How was it settled?" Tommy asked as they straightened up and looked around.

"The Old Man ruled that rust was rust and bilge, bilge and holystone, holystone whether it was found in a windjammer or a steam packet's hold. And the only real change caused was that the mutineers used to chip chains in the old days and

were now transferred to the inner skin. The Deep Sea Board of Wind, Wave and Tide upheld the Old Man but gave all Davy Jones' workers a day at the Green to make it up. A lot went on complaining though, so Davy stopped the swearing."

"Stopped the swearing?"

"Oh, yes. That was the biggest punishment of all. The workers didn't mind so much so long as they could grumble and swear, and once they were stopped doing that about the New Locker the complaining just naturally died away. There's no more talk of it now, but Davy still stops a man swearing when he doesn't behave. We used to send all constant offenders to tar the Equator Line, but the new way's much more effective and we like to keep up with modern progress."

"I suppose the Deep Sea Board of Wind, Wave and Tide have a lot of power down here?" Tommy observed. Jimmylegs nodded seriously.

"It's made up of Old Shellbacks and Sea Lawyers, and they know all the Ancient Customs and all the Privileges of Long Standing. Theoretically the Old Man has the veto power but actually he abides by the Board's decisions."

Tommy laughed.

"Why, that's just like it was when I was a kid on the bark *Lucien Arnold.* The skipper didn't like to go against the sea lawyers and the very old seamen we carried."

"Well," said Jimmylegs, "it was the same in my day. Here's Davy Jones."

Tommy looked up and saw an immensely fat man who looked just like a saloon keeper he had once known. The fat man was bearing down on them, his face wreathed in smiles and his eyes twinkling merrily.

"New Hand?" wheezed Davy Jones, looking sidewise at Jimmylegs. "For me? Mutiny, desertion or careless work?"

"Legible *and* passed," answered Jimmylegs. "I'm just showing him around."

"He'd make a good chipper," sighed Davy Jones, eying Tommy's strong arms and wide shoulders. "I've got a particular obstinate beam I could use him on." There was such covetousness in his eyes now that Tommy had to swallow hard to maintain his nerve.

"I've heard quite a lot of you," he managed to gasp. "I was surprized to learn you had a brother though."

Davy Jones frowned and looked suspicious.

"Have you been poking around the North Pole then?"

"There's a deadly feud on between them," whispered Jimmylegs kicking Tommy on the shin. "In my day it was the men-at-arms and the seamen. Now it's the seaman and marines or the focsle and stokehold. Davy claims his younger brother's just an upstart to open an establishment at the North Pole. Davy's got a lot of sympathy because he's been here since Noah. Casey wasn't born until a man named Fulton fiddled around with steam."

"I see," Tommy whispered back. Then to Davy Jones, shaking hands, "No, I've never seen your brother. Merely heard of him. I don't think I'd care to mix with the black gang anyway, being raised on deck."

"A man after my own heart," wheezed Davy Jones shaking hands furiously and his suspicions vanishing. He leaned forward and whispered hoarsely, "I didn't approve when they made Casey a Great Legend. But what can one do? The Deep Sea Board of Wind, Wave and Tide used to be conservative enough and I had a majority there. But since these newfangled ships came about there's been a lot given seats on the Board with radical ideas. Yes, they actually approved of Casey. But I was a Great Legend before he was born. Never forget that, young man, never forget that. I can remember the time when they dropped a live horse overside as a little gift for me. No more though, no more." He shook his head mournfully and wiped away two big tears.

"We'll take a short cut," said Jimmylegs hurriedly. "If he starts crying he'll set up a tidal wave and that always upsets our schedules. He's that sentimental you wouldn't believe it."

Grasping Tommy's arm, Jimmylegs hurried him down a long wooden-stepped companion to a well lighted gangway and then, sliding back a big scuttle, pushed him through the opening and stepped after him. Tommy stood and gaped.

He was in a place so immense he could not see the exact limits of it. All along the bulkhead to his right as far as his eye could reach, there were bunks, each with a little curtain running along wire, each with a little shelf above for odds and ends, each with a fancy-worked canvas hold-all nailed next to the shelf. Below each bunk—they were all lower ones—there stood a long black sea-chest with handles of round sennit studded with freakish knots. In some of the bunks men lay in luxurious idleness, smoking or just gazing upward into what was apparently sheer space. Some men were on their knees before their open sea-chests, decorating the inside, painting a full-rigged ship on the lid, fitting little inside lockers to hold treasures. Other men sat on the chests and ran straight seams in new soft canvas, plying palm and needle with care and evident pleasure. One old salt near where Tommy stood was putting a difficult rose knot in the end of a four-stranded rope and another was busily making a mat of rope-ends and still another weaving triangular sennit.

"No one works except for pleasure," Jimmylegs was saying. Tommy nodded. He could understand that sailormen must do work of some sort.

Along the opposite bulkhead, to his left, there was a certain difference. Here and there white or brown canvas hammocks were slung. Here and there were bunks broader and deeper than the others. Here and there even were great wooden bedsteads with elaborately carved posts and legs and canopies above.

"We keep the seamen to starboard and the officers to port," explained Jimmylegs. "We had a job making them settle down like that. The men complained because some of them wanted hammocks, but that was too unsettling, though they did use to let them sling what they liked in the early days. The fact is we're getting crowded and some sort of system had to be installed. So we ran up that row of standard bunks. The officers of course have whatever they wish. The Old Green didn't allow for bunks or hammocks either, but a lot of the guests complained that they'd stood watch and watch for thirty years or more and they wanted to make it up."

"I see," gasped Tommy and stared at the huge building in the center of the deck, for deck it was below him, with seams, ring-bolts, deadeyes and bitts scattered all about, and each wonderfully decorated with Spanish half-hitching, basket knots, turksheads and flat sennit. Jimmylegs observed that it was impossible to keep some of the older men from doing this. They simply wallowed in an orgy of fancy-work.

But it was the great house that took Tommy's fancy. It was after the fashion of an old inn, a peaceful looking place with bay windows with leaded panes, with casks outside cut into chairs, with benches and tables—long tables, round tables, big tables and little tables. Tommy caught a glimpse of men inside, laughing, playing fiddles, pipes, many queer instruments he did not remember having ever seen before. Men sat around talking and drinking from thick earthenware mugs. There were flowers everywhere, real land flowers blooming and growing, with birds flying through them. There were parrots and monkeys climbing over the house roof, and dogs and cats ran about.

"We had to let them bring their pets, and they moped around for flowers," said Jimmylegs. "The Green's had a lot of trouble. There's a big lawn over behind the house where they go and dance hornpipes and such when they get the mood. The Old Man's Daughters come out now and then and dance too and amuse the men. The Daughters hide behind the breakers and sing the 'Song of the Surf' so the swells don't get out of step, but every moment they get they come here. One of the Daughters'll get attached to you and keep you amused.

It gives the men something to sing about and make fancy mats and knots for. The officers mostly write verses to them and drink their health and think up pretty things to say. The trouble we've always had is that our guests want all sorts of land things, but they can only think of them in a shipboard setting— Come over to the officer's side and I'll point out some of our chief guests."

They walked slowly along down the great deck, teeming with life, with laughter, with deep tarry jests, with music. Every one was doing just exactly as he pleased, all those things he'd always wanted to do on shipboard and never could. Here and there bulkheads had been raised or canvas screens rigged to form separate little cabins or alcoves, and sometimes nooks were created by flowers and vines. The vines and the stems of the flowers were all carefully arrayed with fancy-work, and some of the flowers themselves grew through skilfully woven baskets of boat lacing.

"Yes," said Jimmylegs, shaking his head sadly. "The Green used to be rigged out only like a ship. There were even masts and sails for the men to amuse themselves. But the moderns, starting from King Alfred's time, brought in a lot of queer ideas and now we have flowers and such. The Old Man raised a fuss at first, but the Deep Sea Board of Wind, Wave and Tide ruled that guests of the Green were not on regular articles, their voyage being over, and could please themselves.

"Who's that over there?" Tommy asked, nodding toward a pale-faced, rather thoughtful man in doublet and hose, with a silk shirt open at the throat and wearing a clipped beard. He was playing some sort of game with a shorter, squatter man boasting fierce mustaches.

Jimmylegs chuckled.

"That's Sir Francis Drake and Don Sebastian. I remember when Sir Francis first came the Spaniards here were all afraid of him. They put up barricades in one corner and wouldn't come out for a long time. They sent a complaint to the Old Man that he'd sacked 'em in New Spain, harried 'em over their own seas, chased their Armada many weary leagues and was now come to be their torment and their shame. I never saw men so worried— There was such a noise, every one taking sides, that the Old Man came in person to see what was the matter and, Sir Francis being a special fancy of his, he was very angry. He got them all quieted down at last, while Sir Francis just stood right where you stand now and laughed and laughed until I thought his sides would crack. It was a long time before a Spaniard would pass him without a drawn sword. But that's over with. There's Don Sebastian playing with him as friendly as you please."

"Do you have many quarrels here?" Tommy wanted to know, and Jimmylegs snorted.

"Once every century or so. The last trouble we had was between the navy men and the merchant seamen. That feud seems to be almost as bad as the Great Feud between Davy Jones and Casey. Times must have changed, for in my day navy men were merchant adventurers too—

"But there's always trouble for that matter. Some of the early Britons used to run like hares whenever a Roman or a new Northman came in. For that matter I've seen the whole Green look scared when a Northman was expected. See those two over there, to starboard a bit, in the queer looking clouts? That's Thorfin Karlsefne and Leif Ericson. They're probably arguing about Vinland as usual. Leif's father's the biggest drinker we've got here, but he only takes ale. When he first arrived he organized drinking bouts, and the Green was in an uproar until the Old Man brought Davy Jones to drink him under the table. He's never been quite the same man since— I mean Eric."

Jimmylegs pulled out his thick, short pipe and lighted it with care.

"Nelson and Da Gama and Paul Jones, the American, are almost inseparable. There they are, behind Sir Francis, d'ye

see? They play cards and gamble and quarrel about naval tactics. La Perouse joins them often. They'll all argue about long distance cannonading and boarding with pikes and cutlas until they start hammering on the table and La Perouse will get quite nervous. Then Sir Francis will get up and roar, 'Ram 'em an' board 'em, sirs! Ram 'em an' board 'em!' and laugh his great laugh and they'll all turn and argue with him. But we did that in my day too."

They went into the big house at last and sat down at a small table. They had not been there fifteen seconds when Jimmylegs pounded heavily on the scrubbed wooden top and roared for some one to wait on him. There came running almost immediately a bald-headed fat little man with double chins, a pendulous lip and a white apron about his middle.

"Rum!" bellowed Jimmylegs, scowling. Tommy said, "A beer, please," and felt quite sorry for the fat little man who was all out of breath. He panted, "Yes, sirs, yes, sirs," and hurried away.

"That was the only thing every one ever agreed on here in the Green," Jimmylegs commented, spitting into a box filled with sawdust that served as a spittoon. "All hands demanded for their comfort that the Owners should be waiters, and waiters they are. Some of them you see serving common able seamen once used to own lines. Those who sent ships to sea ill-found clean out the spittoons and wash the mugs. The others jest fetch and carry."

"What about the good Owners—I mean those who treated their ships and men well?" asked Tommy.

Jimmylegs scowled again.

"There ain't any," he snapped. "Leastways we've never come across 'em. In my day it was the Syrians an' Jews an' Genoese. Now it's most any bilge. We had a hard job to get 'em down here though. Y'see they belonged to Old Nick and we has to send down to the Bottom of the World where all the Utterly Lost Souls are. Old Nick's hard t' drive a bargain with but we exchanges ten for one because He claims that Owners is especial wicked and he hates to lose such promising gentlemen. We used t' give him men-at-arms, those that were put aboard our craft to man th' stern-castles and forecastles, but now we gives him marines."

The Owner hurried up with their drinks and Tommy was groping around for a coin to tip him with when Jimmylegs laid a round gold piece on the table and the Owner smiled, bobbed his thanks and gratefully hurried away.

"We always gives 'em a bad gold piece," explained Jimmylegs, burying his face in his mug. "They think it's real until they try it out, just like poor sailors thought their ship was sound when she wasn't and the grub good when it was 'ogsheaded poison. The guests get a great deal of fun out of it. It was suggested at first that all Owners be fed bad salt pork and weevily biscuit but the Deep Sea Board of Wind, Wave and Tide ruled that they liked gold most of all and to be always finding it was bad would be a juster punishment."

"This is good beer," said Tommy, thinking that Fiddlers' Green wasn't so bad after all if every one got his just deserts as it seemed he did. Jimmylegs blew rum drops from his lips, smiled contentedly and went on.

"We get it from sunk ships an' won't touch it unless it's years old. This rum now was casked two hundred years back and it's as sweet as cream. Nothing but the best you'll find here. Which reminds me there was some trouble at first about who should whack out the liquor. They wanted to give Noah the job but he wouldn't take it on account of his not being a drinking man and disapproving of it altogether. Several have had the job on and off. You can always quit here, y'know, and the Old Man will appoint some one else."

"Is that Noah?" asked Tommy in a whisper, pointing to the next table. An ancient looking individual in a long brown cloak with a flowing white beard and a

bald head was sitting there sipping a mug of water.

Jimmylegs nodded.

"He's the only teetotaler in the Green. He tries to start a reform movement every so often and he gets most of the New 'Ands for a while, those what have died of thirst. But they always slip away. There's some talk of expelling him, as the seamen claim it grieves 'em to watch him sipping his water. He wouldn't take his girl neither, one of the Old Man's Daughters. Was terrible shocked. Said he had about ten wives and didn't approve of concubines. Yes, just like that. The Old Man took it almost as a personal insult but he couldn't do much without a vote and Noah was the first here so we hate to send him down to Old Nick. Still, some claims he weren't no sailor at all, sending out birds to do his navigation for him. The Old Man and he has some hot arguments on that point."

"I should think he'd be on the Deep Sea Board of Wind, Wave and Tide," Tommy observed, finishing his beer.

"That was tried," explained Jimmylegs, ramming down the tobacco in his pipe with a horny thumb, "but his ideas was all wrong. The Board's sympathetic with most sorts of ships and men, but what could they do with a seaman that builds his ship like a house perched on a raft and don't allow for no sails nor masts nor pumps nor hatches? Besides, he only made one voyage and was wrecked at that. And the Board claimed his only cargo was animals and he'd never commanded a crew and his view on all points was entirely different from anything else any one had ever heard of. The Board was squabbling all the time when he sat with it, and in the end the Old Man put his foot down and retired him. He's the only retired member of the Board. A great nuisance too. Says there was only fresh water in all the oceans when he was sailing, and makes other radical statements near as bad— But whist! See who's coming?"

Tommy looked round and saw a tall, somber-faced man in flowing garments, wearing a look of unutterable weariness. He walked right by Jimmylegs without recognition and, seating himself at a nearby table, called for some *schnapps*.

"That's Captain Bernard Fokke," whispered Jimmylegs, the first uneasiness apparent about him that Tommy had noticed. "He commands the *Flying Dutchman*."

"You don't say!" whispered Tommy back, very awed, and he half turned in his seat to get another look at the famous man.

"He's doomed to sail forever," Jimmylegs went on in a low voice. "Old Nick wouldn't have him because he hadn't committed sins enough, but while he lived he made jest of Wind, Wave and Tide and the Board got angry. He used to sheath his masts in iron so he could carry sail when other ships were shortened down out of respect for the Board's power. The Board condemned him to sail up and down the world as a warning to mariners not to make a jest of the sea. He was a great captain once though. He went from Rotterdam to the East Indies once in ninety days—and that was long before the clippers."

"What's he doing here then, if the Board condemned him and the Old Man approved?" Tommy wanted to know.

Jimmylegs dropped his voice to a whisper again.

"He has right of way everywhere now because he's become a Great Legend, the same as the Old Man and Davy Jones, and Casey Jones and Mother Carey. He comes here when he's resting up between voyages while his Phantom Crew is careening his Phantom Ship. No one's allowed to talk to him."

"Have you any other Great Legends?" said Tommy, a little scared.

"Oh, yes, there's quite a number. It's as high as you can go. Every one has to approve of you before you can become that. There's the Midnight Leadsman. His captain kept him in the chains at the hand lead until he froze to death, but he's a good Great Legend and is allowed to board vessels in danger and call out the

depths to the officers. But he has to stop after midnight."

"So I've heard," said Tommy shivering, and called for a mug of rum to brace him up.

"Then there's the Swimmer," Jimmylegs went on. "Follow ships, mostly whalers that kill calves and mother whales which is against the Unwritten Law. He was a Finn and his shipmates threw him overboard, but he wouldn't drown. He's a bad Great Legend because he pulls the caulking out of ships' seams until they sink. He's dying out now though since steel hulls came in. I did hear there was a new Great Legend growin' up about a Trimmer, a coal-passer who hanged himself in a ship's bunker. But you'll have to ask Casey Jones about the rights of the matter. That new Great Legend came here once but only the steamship men could see him. Would you like to eat?"

Tommy having admitted he was hungry, Jimmylegs took him to the other end of the great house where stove pipes decorated with Spanish half-hitching stuck up from the roof. Men attired in white aprons and white caps moved about.

"They are the Good Cooks, the men who always did their best with the grub in hand and often put a little of the main cabin grub into the focsle kits. They cook here now for the love of the thing but they can always quit. There's a special agreement by which the Old Man has the fires kept at the same temperature all the time and there's no heat thrown into the galley itself. You see they've always wanted to cook in coolness with everything to hand and here they have it. Chief stewards who sold ship's stores and make cooks go short, and cooks who took no interest in their work and their crews, scrape pans here and wash the galley deck and are put to making complicated dishes with insufficient materials. When these dishes are done they are thrown into the fires so that bad cooks and stewards will understand the Spirit of Good Craftsmanship which will come and grieve them when they see their best efforts ruined."

Jimmylegs sat down at another small table and Tommy dropped in a chair opposite him. An Owner came running up to serve them and he wept continuously all the time so that Tommy asked him what was the matter. He explained that it hurt him to see such good food going down the throats of seamen, but Jimmylegs gave him a bad gold piece and he went away chuckling,

"Well, you'd better get your brasswork done," said Jimmylegs at last, pushing back his chair and getting to his feet. "It's the custom for every New Hand to clean the bell, the handle and the ports outside the main door. The Old Man's first job when he went to sea was cleaning the brass studs of his captain's belt. As soon as the Ark floated Noah polished his brass navigation lights. We have never been able to find any seaman whose first job was not cleaning brass and so the thing has become a custom.

"You're a fully signed guest of the Green now with all rights and privileges once you've finished the brass. If there's anything you want to know or want brought just call for a Passenger. The Pirate at the door will give you the brick-dust and oil and the Bosun's chair by which you reach the bell. I've got to be off to take around a skipper and mate from a Lowestoft boat that went down this morning. Good-by."

"Good-by, sir," said Tommy, getting up and bowing. "And thank you very much."

Jimmylegs stalked off and Tommy sat down again, feeling rather lonely but yet pleased that he was in such a pleasant place. He decided he'd go over and have a talk with Sir Francis Drake and Paul Jones and a few others he knew had been quite great seamen in their day. But he'd better get his brass finished first. He looked around but no one was near enough for him to ask questions of, so he hesitatingly lifted his voice and called—

"Passenger!"

Instantly there ran to his side a queer

looking, inquisitive little man dressed in a tweed suit with a tweed cap and wearing slung at his side a camera in a leather case. He also carried a tightly rolled umbrella, and this he handed to Tommy who took it with some diffidence.

"I can't answer questions unless you poke me first," explained the Passenger.

"Good Lord," said Tommy, "this is the most pleasure I've found so far!"

He poked the Passenger vigorously in the ribs as he had so often been poked himself. The Passenger squirmed and gasped, but forced a smile.

"Now," said Tommy, leaning back in his chair, "what are you doing here? You're not a sailor."

"No, sir, not at all, sir," said the Passenger civilly. "But the moderns who came from the liners demanded our presence so they could ask all the questions we had asked them. We belonged to Old Nick but he exchanged us for two marines each."

"I see," said Tommy. "That's a good idea." He stabbed the Passenger in the ribs again. "Well, show me the way out— I've got to polish the brasswork."

"Oh, you're a newcomer," gasped the Passenger, a subtle change coming over him. "Don't know where anything is, I suppose, and intending to make my life miserable. Well, come along."

"Report 'im. I 'eard 'im. He was insolent," said a gruff voice. Tommy turned and saw that a burly, bewhiskered old seaman had stopped and was glaring at the Passenger. "Report 'im to th' Old Man an' 'ave 'im logged."

"Oh no, no!" squeaked the Passenger, his face paling. "That means a public reprimand. No harm intended, sir, I assure you. Just my manner of speaking."

The burly seaman grunted and moved on repeating, "Report 'im to th' Old Man," and Tommy chuckled and poked out with the umbrella again. The Passenger gasped and forced himself to smile again.

Tommy got up and followed his guide along the great deck until they came to a gangway that turned off. Let in one bulkhead was a big space arranged like a regular locker, inclosed in front with glass, and inside there was a broad table on which various things rested.

"What's this?" asked Tommy, poking his Passenger in the ribs.

"Oh, that's the museum, sir. Those things are the things sailors hear of and talk about and never see. That big key there is the Key of the Keelson. That little key is the Key of the Compass. The slush pot filled with tallow is what they use to Grease the Rudder."

"What's that short piece of Samson line?"

"That's a small length of the Line of the Equator, sir, which ships bump over and break every time they cross. There's a watch constantly at work splicing it and Davy Jones has his very worst offenders tarring it down. That length of immense hawser to the right, sir, is part of the hawser of the big ship that scraped through the Straits of Dover and rubbed the cliffs of England and France white. She was an immense ship, sir—too big for the museum. She took seven years to tack and the wheel relief was a week walking from the focsle to the poop."

"There's something black and all rucked up at the edges," Tommy observed, peering closely.

"That's the Captain's Shadow that froze to the deck one winter in Nome. Every sailor's heard of that. They had to pry it up with bars. That's what rucked up the edges. Beside it is the frozen flame of the lamp that was on the same voyage. They couldn't blow it out so they broke the flame off."

"What's that big empty picture-frame for?" asked Tommy when he had digested the information given.

"That's for the photograph of a Good Owner, sir. They did try to make up some sort of picture to give an idea what he would look like but none of the guests could conceive of a Good Owner so the frame stays empty. Over in the corner there is the famous Self-Scrubbing Broom and coiled over that peg on the bulkhead is the Self-Swinging Hand Lead.

That white piece of blank paper, sir, is a list of Honest Slop-Chest Prices."

"What's the idea of the big plate?"

"Something new, sir. The moderns put that there to hold the Great Purpose and the Friendly Guidance the Seamen's Missions are always talking about while they collect half of the fines the focsle pays into the log book. That tumbler beside the plate was put there by the moderns too, sir, to hold the Gratitude of the People as soon as it can be found."

"Very interesting," said Tommy when all had been pointed out and explained. "Now I must really go and get my brass-work done."

"Tommy Lawn! Tommy Lawn!" a voice began to bellow and there came stumping down the gangway a little bent old man with fierce eyes and a face as wrinkled as an old shoe. He had one leg chopped off short at the knee and from there down he wore a wooden stump. There was a red handkerchief tied over his head and his earrings were big enough to run a curtain on. He wore a broad leather belt, studded with silver bosses, into which was thrust a long wicked looking curved knife.

"I'm the Keeper of the Lost Ships!" he bellowed shaking his skinny fists. "And you're Tommy Lawn, eh? The *Bramcar* wasn't due in for a year yet and I've had t' move over a couple o' galleons and a bireme t' make room. I won't 'ave this interfering. What d'ye know about it? It throws a 'ole year's work outa kilter. Wot d'ye know about it, hey?"

He thrust his contorted face into Tommy's and scowled.

"Excuse me," put in the Passenger. "But if you'll poke me I can explain."

"Explain!" howled the Keeper of the Lost Ships. "What's to explain? Next year's space ain't prepared an' I had t' move two galleons an' a bireme. I tell you they were most annoyed. All those centuries in one spot an' I 'ad t' move 'em fer a lousy, stinking modern tin can—"

"Tin can yourself!" snapped Tommy Lawn rudely. "She was a —— fine ship and I'm ready to fight if you've got anything to say otherwise." He poked the Passenger in the ribs and added, "Go on and explain if you can."

"It was Casey Jones' fault," hurriedly panted the Passenger. "His engineer gentlemen were short-handed and couldn't hold the ice. It came south before it was due. It's really quite simple—"

"Simple? Simple?" howled the Keeper of the Lost Ships. "The bireme's appealed to the Board and if they rule in her favor I'll have to shift everything back again." He nearly wept. "Simple! Simple!" He pulled out his knife and started after the Passenger who hopped nimbly out of the way, snatched his umbrella from Tommy's hand and started to run down the gangway, the Keeper of the Lost Ships in hot pursuit.

Tommy stood there laughing and then it occurred to him that he hadn't yet found the way to the door where the Pirate was, to get his brick-dust and oil, so he started to run after the Passenger and his pursuer, calling at the top of his voice. He tripped over something and his head hit the bulkhead and lights blurred before his eyes, revolved, growing purple and then red and then dying in blackness. Some one was shaking him—

"Are you all right?" said a voice and Tommy looked up and saw the stars shining above. He was in a ship's boat, dripping wet and icy cold and there was a taste of brandy in his mouth. "Just got you on the boathook in time." He recognized the mate's voice. "You'd have been a goner 'nother half second. Here, sit up and drink some more. There's a fishing schooner bleating about over yonder waiting to pick us up."

GLORY and a Yaqui color-bearer

El Peladito

By H. H. DUNN

HE WAS the natural son of Cajeme Mori, that fighting chief of the Yaqui, who between the ages of sixty and sixty-five became the father of three boys by as many mothers. Being a natural son, he never could hope to inherit leadership of those lean brown warriors whose tribal name had been an earful of terror to Aztec, Spaniard, Frenchman and Mexican for better than five centuries. Being a natural son, however, had certain advantages and a little prestige, both reflected from the green diorite chair of his father. He could, for example, take food where he found it; the prettiest girl of the tribe was his, provided he could catch her, and also provided that his father or his legitimate older brother did not want her; and when the *tesguin* pots were ripe, his was whatever share of the liquor he cared to take.

Indeed, it was too much of this usually mild wine of the corn that led him from his cliff-hung, rock-walled village near the headwaters of the Rio Yaqui into the semi-white, always dangerous town of Altar. He sought adventure—and he found it—in the shape of Colonel Kosterlitzky, commander of all the *guardia rural* of the state of Sonora, and his bodyguard of fifty *rurales*. One drunken Indian looked much like another to them, and when they left, the natural son of the Iron Arrow of the Yaqui was just one of the dozen bronzed *salvajes*, all tied together and all walking between the files of the gray-clad mounted federal police.

In Hermosillo, the languid, passionate capital of Sonora, those who sat in authority for the great Don Porfirio gave him a choice. He could join the army for four years or he could be sent, an *enganchado*, to labor in the tobacco fields of the Valle Nacional. Though he understood little Spanish and had never heard of the slave-camps of the southern end of the state of the True Cross, he chose the army. Thus Mayko, the son of Mori, as he called himself, became a number, was issued a uniform—he who always had run with less than a blanket—taught to care for and shoot a rifle, and his name was entered on a mysterious paper, by virtue of which he was to be paid thirty *centavos*—fifteen cents—a day so long as he served the government of Mexico.

They whisked him in a train a thousand miles east and south into a military post where there would be no opportunity for him to meet others of his race; and there, because he stood more than two yards in his bare feet, they named this thoroughbred of an ancient tribe "El Peladíto"—the Little Naked One. He had courage and bravery—which often are two different things—strength, endurance and speed. The rifle came to his hand as easily as the bow and, because he pitfalled the deer and trapped the wild

"*El Peladito*," *copyright*, 1927, *by H. H. Dunn.*

turkeys in the jungle around his company's station, the cost of his food, for which all Mexican soldiers had to pay, fell from about eight or ten centavos a day to three or four. Twice each month when he was paid, the money went into the little fiber bag slung to a beaded belt—all that remained to him of the trappings of a Yaqui youth.

Of Spanish he learned what he needed to understand the orders given him, and no more. His heart and his mind were amid the cliffs and crags of the beginnings of the Rio Yaqui. Yet he had no thought that he was a prisoner, no idea of escape. There remained in the back of his high, rather narrow head the idea that at the end of four years he could return to his people, and he waited for that return. He learned that the few coins he received from the distant and mysterious *gobierno* would carry him some day to his mountains and his river, so he kept those bits of silver and copper, changing them month by month for others of larger value, until the fiber pouch bulged.

Then, because he was faithful, brave and obedient, they gave into his charge the company *bandera*, the flag with the red and green and white stripes and the eagle clutching the snake above the flat-leaved *nopal*. At first the flag meant nothing to him save that it represented the distant government. But at the first pay-day he found that for each day he had had charge of the banner he received five *centavos* more than for the other days. If this continued he would in time have much more than he needed to return to the Rio Yaqui; possibly he could buy a rifle like the Mauser he carried, and cartridges for it, to take back to aid in the centuries-long fight against the white man who paid him the thirty-five *centavos* a day. Then the flag became a part of him. What the block of gold, the altar of the Ancient Ones back in the cave on the singing mountain at the very head of the old river was to his father and had been to his father's fathers, that tricolored cloth became to him, because by it and with it he would the sooner see his home.

Then, out of the north, suddenly and with only a whispered word of its movement, came what others called "the revolution." Trails that had been silent save for the squeal of the *javelin* and the cry of the *tigre* became spotted with mounted armed men moving always inland, men not of the army, men without uniforms, with all manner of rifles, some only with *machetes;* and here and there a woman, more unkempt, more fierce than the men, and as heavily armed.

On a May morning in 1911 he, too, was put in motion, with the rest of his company, bound northward. From towns they passed through they picked up other companies until, when they swung into the wide paved highway at Cuernavaca and began to climb the backbone of the continent toward the peaks of the Three Marys, they were a regiment.

When they rose over the divide, nearly two miles above the blue-gray-green Gulf three hundred miles to the eastward, he seemed almost at home again. No buck in the spring ever trod the slopes of his own Sierra Madre as this son of Cajeme Mori strode down the broad stone-faced *camino* into the ancient capital of Moquathtesuma. The thin air of the Vale of Anahuac was to him more powerful than the *tesguin* the old men brewed in the far altitudes of his own *tierra*, and when they stationed him and his company, with grizzled old Colonel Flores still in command, just back of the National Palace, the Little Naked One felt that he must be nearer the peaks of the land of the Yaqui than he had been in the three years since he had seen it last.

He stood amazed, but unawed and without fear, when troops by thousands, mounted and on foot and in wagons, clattered past the old stone barracks, bound for the ancient Indian fort of Ajusco or the suburbs of Tlalnepantla, Lecheria, San Angel and Guadalupe. He did not know that the strange thing they called revolution was closing in on the city and the palace—and on himself. He had

no idea that the long-retired, gray-haired Indian fighters who had stood with Porfirio Diaz at Puebla and helped him with the founding of the Second Republic nearly half a century before were being called back in an effort to check the Coahuila Dreamer in the north and a new-risen Attila in the south. But from his Indian ancestry whispering in his ear, he knew that war was afoot and he kept himself accordingly ready, as he would have kept himself in the laid-stone village clinging like a swallow's nest to the cliff on the Rio Yaqui.

Then one morning, long before dawn had pinked the cone of Popocatepetl or the jagged wall of Ixtaccihuatl, he, with his company, was awakened, formed in line and marched to a railroad station he had never seen. There they were herded into a steel gondola, issued ammunition in such quantity as never before, given food free and a drink of *tequila* distilled from the roots of the *maguey* at Guadalajara, more than four hundred miles away. Back of the gondola was a passenger car, and back of that a freight car, its sides and ends encased in steel, crisscrossed in small checker-boarding to conceal the loopholes.

Ahead was one of those huge things the other soldiers called *maquinas*—the puffing monsters that pulled the trains over the mountains and through the valleys. It, too, was covered with steel. Out of one of the windows of the coach came a gray head speaking to a man in the uniform of a general, a man who removed his cap with all its gold braid and spoke as with great respect.

"Ah, Don Porfirio goes," said a soldier who had been in the capital. "Well, he has reason. He goes and Madero comes." Then in a whisper, "*Viva Madero!*"

He might as well have said, "The king is dead, long live the king!" for the effect on El Peladíto. Here was the government, the distant, mysterious *gobierno*, which had given him the flag to carry and five cents more a day until now he had copper and silver—aye, even gold, in that fiber bag, more than he had known to be in the world, outside the solid mass of the Golden Altar where his father made sacrifice. He looked again at the gray head, now being withdrawn through the window, and felt once more of the fiber bag resting in the hollow where his lean flank gave way to his leg bones.

Yes, the government was going away, but the government was taking him with it. Why did not the government stay and fight? That had been the way his father had done, and his fathers before him. Thus, they held the stone villages on the Rio Yaqui, their homes. Surely this great city was the home of the government. Why did not the government hold it?

Then some one poked him out of his mental fog with the muzzle of a rifle and ordered him with the flag back to the armored freight-car, where the banner was stuck, pole and all, in the brake wheel. A rifle was thrust into his hands and he was herded back to the gondola. The rest of the soldiers sat on the bottom of the car, their backs against the walls, but the Little Naked One remained standing. He did not know where he was going nor when or how he would get back, so he wanted to see the country, remember the trail, if he could.

The train started, gathered speed, dashed out of the city along the old Tezcocan causeway past the lake of Tezcoco with its swarms of flies whose eggs are gathered as food, and its huge salamanders, also eaten. At San Lorenzo, the full glory of the snow-crowned peaks of Popocatepetl, Ixtaccihuatl and Malintzi burst upon him, the rolling foothills covered for mile on mile by the serrated blue-green plants of the *maguey*. Through Tepeyahualco, from whose *haciendas* come the coal-black fighting bulls for the Plaza de Toros in Mexico City, they moved faster than the *joven* from the gorges of the Rio Yaqui ever had moved before.

Then suddenly the air about his head seemed filled with swarming, invisible bees. El Peladíto knew them for what they were—lead and steel bees whose sting is death—but he had not learned

that the bullet one hears never kills the hearer, and he dropped with the speed of a startled mountain sheep to the bottom of the gondola. A *subteniente*, left in command at the most dangerous post on the train, barked orders in mixed Spanish and Indian. Men rose to the rim of the steel wall seeking a target outside, but none was visible. Only, from a rocky point three hundred yards away, a red-and-green-and-white flag, with a black skull and the one word "Madero" painted on it. From a lesser distance, alongside the track, came the bullets.

It meant nothing to the Little Naked One that this was the *bandera* of Genovevo de la O., the land pirate of the Sierra, but it did make him think of the fighting in the hills of his own *tierra*, where the Yaqui amid similar rock-covered peaks made similar attacks on the army of which he now was one. In another two months, if all went well, he would be free from the army; the fiber pouch would be well filled; he could pay his way, when walking failed, back to the gorges of the Rio Yaqui. With the extra pay for the flag—but where was his flag? He crept to the side of the car away from the firing, lifted himself to the edge, peered back and saw the tricolor dancing, not from the wind, for there was none, but from the storm of bullets which swept it. As in all their battles in Mexico, the rebels were trying first of all to shoot down the flag of their enemy first.

A bullet splintered into the staff—another. The flag lopped drunkenly at an angle over the roof of the car. One more lucky shot and it would be down. If he lost his flag, he would lose his five centavos a day. And five centavos a day for those two months would feed him all the way back to Altar and beyond. The remainder in the fiber bag would pay for the rifle and the ammunition; maybe for one of those flat, many-shooting *pistolas* like the *coronel* and the *capitán* carried.

So, with the long cry of his fathers—"*Oo-oo-ley, Uh-lah!*"—the cry many a veteran of the Mexican Indian wars remembers to the day of his death, El Peladíto lifted himself in a wide hand-helped leap over the wall of the gondola. He landed running on the safe side of the train, and in half a dozen heart-beats was on the roof of the box-car, the flag in his arms, turning for the fifteen-foot drop back to earth.

But the steel and the lead that swarmed for the flag flew in double numbers for him. He staggered, half-turned, fell across the brake-wheel and lay still. Lacking wind, the red-and-white-and-green *bandera* dropped across him, until only his feet showed spraddled grotesquely on the running board along the top of the car.

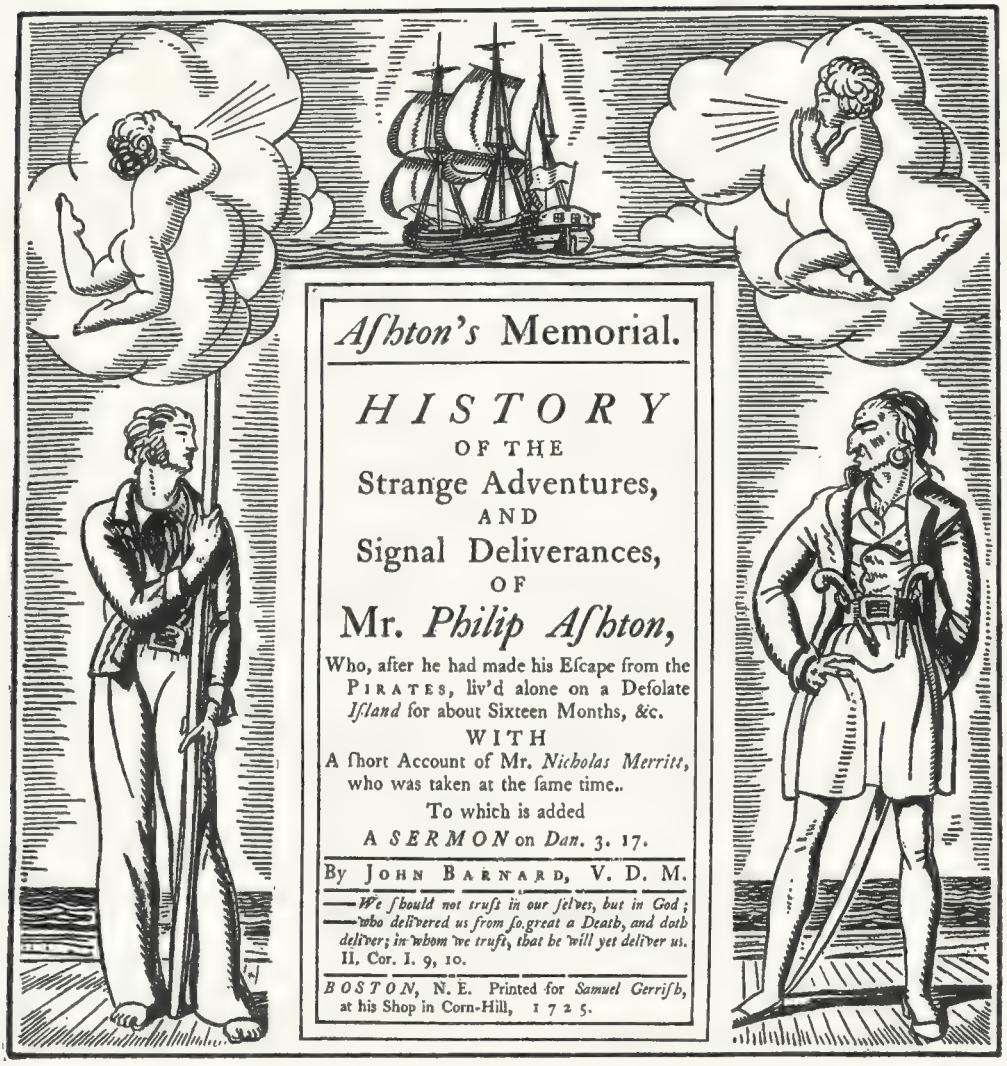
The train groaned to a stop. Men cascaded out of the gondola. Officers slipped from the armored car. Out of the coach came a gray-haired erect figure, hatless, coatless, shirt open at the throat, slippers spatting on the gravel in time to the orders barked from beneath a bristling mustache. The Lion of Oaxaca was fighting his last battle, his only weapon a heavy ironwood stick.

"*Conmigo, muchachos! Conmigo!*"

And they went with him, went with that Don Porfirio, of whom to some in that fight this was the first and last sight. They went until Genovevo and his banditti were glad to seize their skull-and-cross-boned flag and flee with their lives.

When they returned to the armored car, he who had been president ordered that the Little Naked One be carried into the coach and there laid out beneath the bullet-riddled *bandera*. Fourteen Mauser balls had found the natural son of Cajeme Mori no obstacle to their passage, and on at least one of them his soul had gone forth. As they moved him, a soldier looted the fiber bag from the hollow of his thigh.

THREE years later when I, who had been on that train, inquired of the old men in Guapachic, the rock-walled village on the Rio Yaqui, as to one Mayko Mori, they replied that he had "gone white" and had been expelled from the tribe.


Aſhton's Memorial.
HISTORY
OF THE
Strange Adventures,
AND
Signal Deliverances,
OF
Mr. *Philip Aſhton*,
Who, after he had made his Eſcape from the PIRATES, liv'd alone on a Deſolate *Iſland* for about Sixteen Months, &c.
WITH
A ſhort Account of Mr. *Nicholas Merritt*, who was taken at the ſame time..
To which is added
A *SERMON* on *Dan.* 3. 17.
By JOHN BARNARD, V. D. M.
——*We ſhould not truſt in our ſelves, but in God;*
——*who delivered us from ſo great a Death, and doth deliver; in whom we truſt, that he will yet deliver us.*
II. Cor. I. 9, 10.
BOSTON, N. E. Printed for *Samuel Gerriſh*, at his Shop in Corn-Hill, 1725.

FOREWORD

THE voluntary exile of Alexander Selkirk on the Isle of Juan Ferñandez, far off the coast of Chile in the South Pacific Ocean, was the basis for the greatest sea story ever written, "Robinson Crusoe." Most of our readers have read the tale. We leave them to judge whether the following story, a chronicle of absolute facts, is not far more wonderful.

Robinson Crusoe landed alone and shipwrecked, but he had behind him a whole ship's store to draw from. His lot was not comparable for a single instant with that of Philip Ashton, a youth of twenty, who landed but a few years after Selkirk's adventure on a small lone isle, long deserted even by Indians, in the middle of great Honduras Bay.

Truth is stranger than fiction, of which De Foe was a great master. He used to haunt the docks and the slums of the London of his day, and from the mere memory of his talks with individuals he built up the most wonderful romances, which will always be read. "Robinson Crusoe" is one of them. But place for Philip Ashton! Read his story carefully and admit that "Robinson Crusoe" is clearly outdone.

A NARRATIVE

of Old Whaling Days

EDITED BY

J. S. FRENCH

Ashton landed on Roatan Island in a shirt and overalls, without one single ounce of provisions, tools or stores of any kind. The tale of his life there seems almost incredible. There is not, as a matter of fact, another one in the world that parallels it. Yet consider the case of this young hero of dauntless New England blood, trained to coastal navigation as a fisherman from his early boyhood, six-foot, athletic and powerful, as strong of mind as of body, with an invincible spirit sustained by a profoundly religious ancestry of the old Puritan type. It would be pretty difficult to find a man more fit for just such an adventure as he experienced. Added to this his stern, conscientious hatred of the pirates and all their ways, and a determination to be rid of them for good at the first opportunity, and we have an impelling motive as powerful as his remarkable physical constitution.

When Philip Ashton was finally rescued and he returned home and again trod the streets of old Marblehead, relatives, friends and neighbors would hear of nothing else but his stories of his two years at sea. Little wonder that he was finally obliged to sit down to the task of recording the tale. And in his plain, blunt fashion, with many an interjected offer of praise to the God whom in his heart of hearts he worshipped and who he devoutly believed had preserved him through incredible dangers and sufferings, he wrote the story.

This was very promptly published in a little book in Boston in the year 1725. The writer has seen an original copy. The title-page is here reproduced in facsimile. So far as known this remarkable narrative slumbered for two hundred years till the Marine Research Society of Salem, Mass., reprinted it from one of the very few remaining copies still known in New England in their valuable historical work, "The Pirates of the New England Coast," in 1924. This was issued in a very limited edition and copies are not now for sale.

We present this story to our readers with absolute assurance of its verity and veracity in every detail and in the belief that they will agree that truth is, verily, stranger than fiction.

UPON Friday, June 15th, 1722, after I had been out for some time in the Schooner *Milton*, upon the Fishing grounds, off Cape Sable Shoar, among others, I came to Sail in Company with Nicholas Merritt, in a Shallop, and stood in for Port-Rossaway, designing to Harbour there till the Sabbath was over; where we arrived about Four of the Clock in the Afternoon.

When we came into the Harbour, where several of our Fishing Vessels had arrived before us, we spy'd among them a Brigantine, which we supposed to have been an Inward bound Vessel from the West Indies, and had no apprehensions of any

Danger from her; but by that time we had been at Anchor two or three Hours a Boat from the Brigantine, with Four hands, came along side of us, and the Men Jumpt in upon our Deck, without our suspecting any thing but that they were Friends, come on board to visit or inquire what News; till they drew their Cutlasses and Pistols from under their Clothes, and Cock'd the one and Brandish'd the other, and began to Curse & Swear at us, and demanded a Surrender of our Selves and Vessel to them.

It was too late for us to rectify our Mistake and think of Freeing our Selves from their power; for however we might have been able (being Five of us and a Boy) to have kept them at a Distance had we known who they were, before they had boarded us, yet now we had our Arms to seek and, being in no Capacity to make any Resistance, were necessitated to submit ourselves to their will and pleasure. In this manner they surprized Nicholas Merrit and 12 or 13 other Fishing Vessels this Evening.

When the Boat went off from our Vessel, they carried me on board the Brigantine, and who should it prove but the Infamous Ned Low, the Pirate, with about 42 Hands, 2 Great Guns and 4 Swivel Guns. You may easily imagine how I look'd and felt when, too late to prevent it, I found my self fallen into the hands of such a mad, roaring, mischievous Crew; yet I hoped that they would not force me away with them, and I purposed to endure any hardship among them patiently, rather than turn Pirate with them.

Low presently sent for me Aft, and according to the Pirates usual Custom, and in their proper Dialect, asked me if I would sign their Articles and go along with them. I told him, No; I could by no means consent to go with them, I should be glad if he would give me my Liberty, and put me on board any Vessel, or set me on shoar there. For indeed my dislike of their Company and Actions, my concern for my Parents and my fears of being found in such bad Company made me dread the thoughts of being carried away by them; so that I had not the least Inclination to continue with them.

Upon my utter Refusal to joyn and go with them, I was thrust down into the Hold, which I found to be a safe retreat for me several times afterwards. By that time, I had been in the Hold a few Hours, they had compleated the taking the several Vessels that were in the Harbour, and the Examining of the Men; and the next Day I was fetched up with some others that were there, and about 30 or 40 of us were put on board a Schooner belonging to Mr. Orn of Marblehead, which the Pirates made use of for a sort of a Prison, upon the present occasion; where we were all confined unarm'd, with an armed Guard over us, till the Sultan's pleasure should be further known.

The next Lord's Day about Noon one of the Quarter Masters, John Russel by Name, came on board the Schooner and took six of us (Nicholas Merritt, Joseph Libbie, Lawrence Fabens, and my self, all of Marblehead, the Eldest of, if I mistake not, under 21 Years of Age, with two others) and carried us on board the Brigantine; where we were called upon the Quarter Deck, and Low came up to us with Pistol in hand, and with a full mouth demanded, Are any of you Married Men? This short and unexpected Question, and sight of the Pistol, struck us all dumb, and not a Man of us dared to speak a word, for fear there should have been a design in it, which we were not able to see thro'. Our Silence kindled our new Master into a Flame, who could not bear it, that so many Beardless Boyes should deny him an Answer to so plain a Question; and therefore in a Rage, he Cock'd his Pistol and clapt it to my Head, and cryed out, You D—g! why don't you Answer me? And Swore vehemently he would shoot me thro' the Head if I did not tell him immediately whether I was Married or no.

I was sufficiently frightened at the fierceness of the Man and the boldness of his threatening, but rather than lose

my Life for so trifling a matter, I e'en ventured at length to tell him I was not Married, as loud as I dar'd to speak it; and so said the rest of my Companions. Upon this he seemed something pacified, and turned away from us.

It seems his design was to take no Married Man away with him, how young soever he might be, which I often wondered at; till after I had been with him some considerable time and could observe in him an uneasiness in the sentiments of his Mind and the workings of his passions towards a young Child he had at Boston (his Wife being Dead, as I learned, some small time before he turned Pirate) which upon every lucid interval from Reveling and Drink he would express a great tenderness for, insomuch that I have seen him sit down and weep plentifully upon the mentioning of it; and then I concluded, that probably the Reason of his taking none but Single Men was that he might have none with him under the Influence of such powerful attractives as a Wife & Children lest they should grow uneasy in his Service, and have an Inclination to Desert him and return home for the sake of their Families.

Low presently came up to us again and asked the Old Question, Whether we would Sign their Articles, and go along with them? We all told him No; we could not; so we were dismissed. But within a little while we were call'd to him Singly, and then it was demanded of me, with Sternness and Threats, whether I would Joyn with them? I still persisted in the Denial; which thro' the assistance of Heaven, I was resolved to do, tho' he shot me. And as I understood, all my Six Companions, who were called in their turns, still refused to go with him.

Then I was led down into the Steerage, by one of the Quarter Masters, and there I was assaulted with Temptations of another Kind, in hopes to win me over to become one of them; a number of them got about me, and instead of Hissing, shook their Rattles, and treated me with abundance of Respect and Kindness, in their way; they did all they could to sooth my Sorrows, and set before me the strong Allurement of the Vast Riches they should gain, and what Mighty Men they designed to be, and would fain have me to joyn with them and share in their Spoils; and to make all go down the more Glib, they greatly Importuned me to Drink with them, not doubting but this wile would sufficiently entangle me, and so they should prevail with me to do that in my Cups, which they perceived they could not bring me to while I was Sober; but all their fair and plausible Carriage, their proffered Kindness and airy notions of Riches had not the Effect upon me which they desired; and I had no Inclination to drown my Sorrows with my Senses in their Inebriating Bowls, and so refused their Drink, as well as their Proposals.

After this I was brought upon Deck again, and Low came up to me, with His Pistol Cock'd, and clap'd it to my Head, and said to me, You D—g you! if you will not Sign our Articles and go along with me I'll shoot you thro' the Head, and uttered his Threats with his utmost Fierceness, and with the usual Flashes of Swearing and Cursing. I told him That I was in his hands, and he might do with me what he pleased, but I could not be willing to go with him: and then I earnestly beg'd of him, with many Tears, and used all the Arguments I could think of to perswade him not to carry me away; but he was deaf to my Cryes, and unmoved by all I could say to him; and told me, I was an Impudent Dog, and Swore I should go with him whether I would or no.

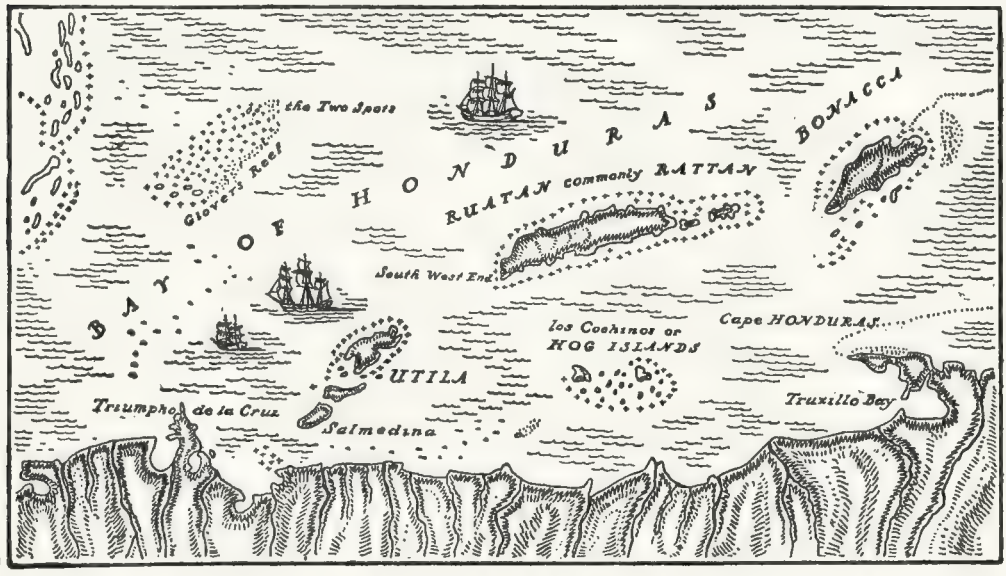
So I found all my Cryes and Entreaties were in vain, and there was no help for it, go with them I must, and as I understood, they set mine and my Townsmen's Names down in their Book, tho' against our Consent. And I desire to mention it with due Acknowledgments to God, who withheld me, that neither their promises nor their threatenings, nor blows could move me to a willingness to Joyn with them in their pernicious ways.

Upon Tuesday, June 19th, they changed their Vessel and took for their Privateer, as they call'd it, a Schooner

belonging to Mr. Joseph Dolliber of Marblehead, being new, clean and a good Sailer, and shipped all their hands on board her, and put the Prisoners, such as they designed to send home, on board the Brigantine, with one —— who was her Master, and ordered them for Boston.

When I saw the Captives were likely to be sent home, I thought I would make one attempt more to obtain my Freedom, and accordingly Nicholas Merrit, my Townsman and Kinsman, went along with me to Low, and we fell upon our Knees, and with utmost Importunity besought him to let us go Home in the Brigantine,

And yet before the Brigantine sailed, an opportunity presented that gave me some hopes that I might get away from them; for some of Low's people who had been on shoar at Port-Rossaway to get water had left a Dog belonging to him behind them; and, Low observing the Dog a shoar howling to come off, order'd some hands to take the Boat and fetch him. Two young Men, John Holman and Benjamin Ashton, both of Marblehead, readily Jumpt into the Boat, and I (who pretty well know their Inclination to be rid of such Company, was exceedingly desirous my self to be freed from my



among the rest of the Captives: but he immediately called for his Pistols, and told us we should not go, and Swore bitterly if either of us offered to stir, he would shoot us down.

Thus all attempts to be delivered out of the hands of unreasonable Men (if they may be called Men) were hitherto unsuccessful; and I had the melancholy prospect of seeing the Brigantine sail away with the most of us that were taken at Port-Rossaway, but my self and three Townsmen mentioned, and four of Shoalmen detained on board the Schooner, in the worst of Captivity, without any present likelyhood of Escaping.

present Station, and thought if I could but once set foot on shoar, they should have good luck to get me on board again) was getting over the side into the Boat; but Quarter Master Russel spy'd me and caught hold on my Shoulder and drew me in board, and with a Curse told me Two was eno', I should not go. The two Young Men had more sense and virtue than to come off to them again, so that after some time of waiting, they found they were deprived of their Men, their Boat and their Dog; and they could not go after them.

When they saw what a trick was play'd them, the Quarter Master came up to me

Cursing and Swearing, that I knew of their design to Run away and intended to have been one of them; but tho' it would have been an unspeakable pleasure to me to have been with them, yet I was forced to tell him I knew not of their design; and indeed I did not, tho' I had good reason to suspect what would be the event of their going. This did not pacifie the Quarter Master, who with outragious Cursing and Swearing clapt his Pistol to my Head and snap'd it; but it miss'd Fire: this enraged him the more; and he repeated the snapping of his Pistol at my Head three times, and it as often miss'd Fire.

Upon which he held it over-board and snap'd it the fourth time and then it went off very readily. The Quarter Master upon this, in the utmost fury, drew his Cutlass and fell upon me with it, but I leap'd down into the Hold and got among a Crowd that was there and so escaped the further effects of his madness and rage.

All hopes of obtaining Deliverance were now past and gone; the Brigantine and Fishing Vessels were upon their way homeward, the Boat was ashore and not likely to come off again; I could see no possible way of Escape, and who can express the concern and Agony I was in to see my self, a Young Lad of 20 Years Old, carried forcibly from my Parents, whom I had so much reason to value for the tenderness I knew they had for me, & to whom my being among Pyrates would be as a Sword in their Bowels and the Anguishes of death to them; confined to such Company as I could not but have an exceeding great abhorrence of; in Danger of being poisoned in my morals, by Living among them, and of falling a Sacrifice to Justice, if ever I should be taken with them.

I had no way left for my Comfort, but earnestly to commit my self and my cause to God, and wait upon Him for Deliverance in his own time and way; and in the mean while firmly to resolve, thro' Divine Assistance, that nothing should ever bring me to a willingness to Joyn with them or share in their Spoils.

I soon found that any Death was preferible to being link'd with such a vile Crew of Miscreants, to whom it was a sport to do Mischief; where prodigious Drinking, monstrous Cursing and Swearing, hideous Blasphemies and open defiance of Heaven and contempt to Hell it self was the constant Employment, unless when Sleep something abated the Noise and Revellings.

Thus Confined, the best course I could take, was to keep out of the way, down in the Hold, or wherever I could be most free from their perpetual Din; and fixed purpose with my self, that the first time I had an opportunity to set my Foot on shore, let it be in what part of the World it would, it should prove (if possible) my taking a final leave of Low and Company.

I would remark it now also (that I might not interrupt the Story with it afterwards) that while I was on board Low, they used once a Week, or Fortnight, as the Evil Spirit moved them, to bring me under Examination and anew demand my Signing their Articles and Joyning with them; but Blessed by God, I was enabled to persist in a constant refusal to become one of them, tho' I was thrashed with Sword or Cane, as often as I denyed them; the fury of which I had no way to avoid, but by Jumping down into the Hold, where for a while I was safe.

I look'd upon my self, for a long while but as a Dead Man among them and expected every Day of Examination would prove the last of my Life, till I learned from some of them that it was one of their Articles Not to Draw Blood or take away the Life of any Man after they had given him Quarter, unless he was to be punished as a Criminal; and this emboldned me afterwards, so that I was not so much affraid to deny them, seeing my Life was given me for a Prey.

This Tuesday, towards Evening, Low and Company came to sail in the Schooner formerly called the *Mary*, now the *Fancy*, and made off for Newfoundland; and here they met with such an Adventure as had like to have proved fatal to them. They

fell in with the Mouth of St. John's Harbour in a Fogg, before they knew where they were; when the Fogg clearing up a little, they spy'd a large Ship riding at Anchor in the Harbour, but could not discern what she was by reason of the thickness of the Air, and concluded she was a Fish-Trader. This they look'd upon as Boon Prize for them and thought they should be wonderfully well accommodated with a good Ship under Foot, and if she proved by a good Sailer, would greatly further their Roving Designs, and render them a Match for almost any thing they could meet with, so that they need not fear being taken.

Accordingly they came to a Resolution to go in and take her; and imagining it was best doing it by Stratagem, they concluded to put all their Hands but Six or Seven down in the Hold and make a shew as if they were a Fishing Vessel, and so run up along side of her and surprize her, and bring her off; and great was their Joy at the distant prospect how cleverly they should catch her. They began to put their designs in Execution, stowed away their Hands, leaving but a few upon Deck, and made Sail in order to seize the Prey; when there comes along a small Fisher-Boat from out the Harbour and hailed them, and asked them from whence they were? They told them from Barbadoes, and were laden with Rhum and Sugar; then they asked the Fisherman, What large Ship that was in the Harbour? who told them it was a large Man-of-War.

The very Name of a Man-of-War struck them all up in a Heap, spoil'd their Mirth, their fair Hopes and promising Design of having a good Ship at Command; and lest they should catch a Tartar, they thought it their wisest and safest way, instead of going into the Harbour, to be gone as fast as they could.

And accordingly they stretched away farther Eastward, and put into a small Harbour, called Carboneur, about 15 Leagues distance; where they went on Shoar, took the Place and destroyed the Houses, but hurt none of the People; as they told me, for I was not suffered to go a shoar with them.

The next Day they made off for the Grand Bank, where they took seven or eight Vessels, and among them a French Banker, which went heavily; and therefore they threw the greatest part of the Wheat over board, reserving only eno' to Ballast the Vessel for the present, and took what they wanted out of the Banker, and then Burnt her, and sent the most of the Portugueze away in a large Lanch they had taken.

Now they made the *Pink*, which Mounted 14 Guns, their Commodore, and with this and the Schooner Sailed from St. Michaels to the Canaries, where off of Teneriff they gave Chase to a Sloop which got under the Command of the Fortress, and so escaped sailing into their Hands, but stretching along to the Western end of the Island, they came up with a Fishing Boat, and being in want of Water, made them Pilot them into a small Harbour, where they went a shore and got a supply.

After they had Watered they Sailed away for Cape de Verde Islands, and upon making the Isle of May, they Descry'd a Sloop, which they took, and it proved to be a Bristol-man, one Pare or Pier Master; this Sloop they designed for a Tender and put on board her my Kinsman Nicholas Merritt, with 8 Or 9 hands more, and Sailed away for Bonavista, with a design to careen their Vessels.

In their Passage to Bonavista, the Sloop wronged both the *Pink* and the Schooner; which the Hands on board observing, being mostly Forced Men, or such as were weary of their Employment, upon the Fifth of September Ran away with her and made their Escape.

When they came to Bonavista they hove down the Schooner and careen'd her, and then the *Pink;* and here they gave the Wheat which they had kept to Ballast the *Pink* with to the Portugueze and took other Ballast.

After they had cleaned and fitted their Vessels, they steered away for St. Nicholas, to get better Water; and here as I was

told, 7 or 8 hands out of the *Pink* went a shore a Fowling, but never came off more, among which I suppose Lawrence Fabins was one, and what became of them I never could hear to this Day. Then they put out to Sea and stood away for the Coast of Brasil, hoping to meet with Richer Prizes than they had yet taken.

In the Passage thither they made a Ship, which they gave chase to, but could not come up with; and when they came upon the Coast it had like to have proved a sad Coast to them; for the Trade-Winds blowing exceeding hard at South East, they fell in upon the Northern part of the Coast, near 200 Leagues to the Leeward of where they designed; and here we were all in exceeding great Danger, and for Five Days and Nights together, hourly feared when we should be swallowed up by the violence of the Wind and Sea, or stranded upon some of the Shoals that lay many Leagues off from Land.

In this time of Extremity the Poor Wretches had no where to go for Help! For they were at open Defiance with their Maker, & they could have but little comfort in the thoughts of their Agreement with Hell. Such mighty Hectors as they were in a clear Sky and a fair Gale, yet a fierce Wind and a boisterous Sea sunk their Spirits to a Cowardly dejection, and they evidently feared the Almighty, whom before they defied, lest He was come to Torment them before their expected Time; and tho' they were so habituated to Cursing and Swearing that the Dismal Prospect of Death, & this of so long Continuance, could not Correct the language of most of them, yet you might plainly see the inward Horror and Anguish of their Minds visible in their Countenances, and like Men amazed or starting out of Sleep in a fright, I could hear them ever now and then cry out, Oh! I wish I were at Home.

When the Fierceness of the Weather was over and they had recovered their Spirits, by the Help of a little Nantes, they bore away to the West Indies and made the three Islands call'd the Triangles, lying off the Main about 40 Leagues to the Eastward of Surinam. Here they went in and careened their Vessels again; and it had like to have proved a fatal Scouring to them.

For as they hove down the *Pink*, Low had ordered so many hands upon the Shrouds and Yards, to throw her Bottom out of Water, that it threw her ports, which were open, under Water; and the Water flow'd in with such freedom that it presently overset her. Low and the Doctor were in the Cabin together, and as soon as he perceived the Water to gush in upon him, he bolted out at one of the Stern-Ports, which the Doctor also attempted, but the Sea rushed so violently into the Port by that time as to force him back into the Cabin, upon which Low nimbly run his Arm into the Port and caught hold of his shoulder and drew him out and so saved him.

The Vessel pitched her Masts to the Ground in about 6 Fathom Water and turn'd her Keel out of Water; but as her Hull filled, it sunk, and by the help of her Yard-Arms, which I suppose bore upon the Ground, her Masts were raised something out of Water. The Men that were upon her Shrouds and Yards got upon her Hull, when that was uppermost, and then upon her Top-Masts and Shrouds, when they were raised again.

I (who with other light Lads were sent up to the Main-Top-Gallant Yard) was very difficultly put to it to save my Life, being but a poor Swimmer; for the Boat which picked the Men up refused to take me in, & I was put upon making the best of my way to the Buoy, which with much ado I recovered and, it being large, I stayed my self by it till the Boat came along close by it, and then I called to them to take me in; but they being full of Men still refused me; and I did not know but they meant to leave me to perish there; but the Boat making way a head very slowly because of her deep load, and Joseph Libbie calling to me to put off from the Buoy and Swim to them, I e'en ventured it, and he took me by the hand and drew me in board.

They lost two Men by this Accident, viz. John Bell, and one they called Zana Gourdon. The Men that were on board the Schooner were busy a mending the Sails under an Auning, so they knew nothing of what had happened to *Pink* till the Boat full of Men came along side of them, tho' they were but about Gun-Shot off and We made a great out-cry; and therefore they sent not their Boat to help take up the Men.

And now Low and his Gang, having lost their Frigate, and with her the greatest part of their Provision and Water, were again reduced to their Schooner as their only Privateer, and in her they put to Sea, and were brought to very great straits for want of Water; for they could not get a supply at the Triangles, and when they hoped to furnish themselves at Tobago, the Current set so strong, & the Season was so Calm that they could not recover the Harbour, so they were forced to stand away for Grand Grenada, a French Island about 18 Leagues to the Westward of Tobago, which they gained after they had been at the hardship of half a pint of Water a Man for Sixteen Dayes together.

Here the French came on board and, Low having put all his Men down but a sufficient number to Sail the Vessel, told them upon their Enquiry Whence he was, that he was come from Barbadoes, and had lost his Water, and was oblig'd to put in for a recruit.

The poor People not suspecting him for a Pyrate, readily suffered him to send his Men ashoar and fetch off a supply. But the Frenchmen afterwards suspecting he was a Smugling Trader, thought to have made a Boon Prize of him and the next day fitted out a large Rhode-Island built Sloop of 70 Tuns, with 4 Guns mounted and about 30 Hands, with design to have taken him. Low was apprehensive of no danger from them, till they came close along side of him and plainly discovered their design, by their Number and Actions, and then he called up his hands upon Deck, and having about 90 Hands on board & 8 Guns mounted, the Sloop and Frenchmen fell an easy prey to him, and he made a Privateer of her.

After this they cruised for some time thro' the West Indies, in which excursion they took 7 or 8 Sail of Vessels, chiefly Sloops; at length they came to Santa Cruiz where they took two Sloops more, & then came to Anchor off the Island.

While they lay at Anchor here it came into Low's Head that he wanted a Doctor's Chest, & in order to procure one, he put four of the Frenchmen on board one of the Sloops which he had just now taken & sent them away to St. Thomas's, about 12 Leagues off where the Sloops belonged, with the promise that if they would presently send him off a good Doctor's Chest for what he sent to purchase it with, they should have their Men & Vessels again, but if not, he would kill all the Men & burn the Vessels.

The poor People in Compassion to their Neighbours, & to preserve their Interest, readily complyed with his Demands; so that in little more than 24 Hours the four Frenchmen returned with what they went for, & then according to promise, they & their Sloops were Dismissed.

From Santa Cruz they Sailed till they made Curacao, in which Passage they gave Chase to two Sloops that out sailed them & got clear; then they Ranged the Coast of New Spain and made Carthagena, & about mid-way between Carthagena and Port-Abella, they decry'd two tall Ships, which proved to be the Mermaid Man-of-War & a large Guinea-Man. Low was now in the Rhode Island Sloop, & one Farrington Spriggs a Quarter-Master, was Commander of the Schooner where I still was.

For some time they made Sail after the two Ships, till they came so near that they could plainly see the Man-of-War's large range of Teeth, & then they turned Tail to and made the best of their way from them; upon which the Man-of-War gave them Chase & overhalled them apace. And now I confess I was in as great terrour as ever I had been yet, for I concluded we should be taken, & I could

expect no other butt to Dye for Companies sake; so true is what Solomon tells us, a Companion of Fools shall be destroyed.

But the Pirates finding the Man-Of-War to overhald them, separated, & Low stood out to Sea & Spriggs stood in for the Shoar. The Man-of-War observing the Sloop to be the much larger Vessel, and fullest of Men, threw out all the Sail she could & stood after her, and was in a fair way of coming up with her presently.

But it hapened there was one Man on board the Sloop that knew of a Shoal Ground thereabouts, who directed Low to run over it; he did so, and the Man-of-War who had now so forereached him as to sling a Shot over him, in the close pursuit ran a Ground upon the Shoal, and so Low and Company escaped Hanging for this time.

Spriggs, who was in the Schooner when he saw the Danger they were in of being taken, upon the Man-of-War's out-sailing them, was afraid of falling into the hands of Justice; to prevent which he and one of his Chief Companions took their Pistols and laid them down by them and solemnly Swore to each other and pledg'd the Oath in a Bumper of Liquor that if they saw there was at last no possibility of Escaping, but that they should be taken, they would set Foot to Foot and Shoot one another, to Escape Justice and the Halter. As if Divine Justice were not as inexorable as Humane!

But, as I said, he stood in for the Shoar and made into Pickeroon Bay, about 18 Leagues from Carthagena, and so got out of reach of Danger. By this means the Sloop and Schooner were parted; and Spriggs made Sail towards the Bay of Honduras, and came to Anchor in a small Island called Utilla, about 7 or 8 Leagues to Leeward of Roatan, where by the help of a small Sloop he had taken the Day before he haled down and cleaned the Schooner.

While Spriggs lay at Utilla there was an Opportunity presented which gave occasion to several of us to form a design of making our Escape out of the Pirates Company; for having lost Low and being but weak handed, Spriggs had determined to go thro' the Gulf and come upon the Coast of New-England, to encrease his Company and supply himself with Provision; whereupon a Number of us had entred into a Combination to take the first fair advantage to Subdue our Masters and Free our selves.

There were in all about 22 Men on board the Schooner and 8 of us were in the Plot, which was that when we should come upon the Coast of New-England, we would take the opportunity when the Crew had sufficiently dozed themselves with Drink and had got sound a Sleep, to secure them under the Hatches and bring the Vessel and Company in and throw ourselves upon the Mercy of the Government.

But it pleased God to disappoint our Design. The Day that they came to Sail out of Utilla, after they had been parted from Low about five Weeks, they discovered a large Sloop, which bore down upon them. Spriggs, who knew not the Sloop, but imagined it might be a Spanish Privateer full of Men, being but weak handed himself, made the best of his way from her. The Sloop greatly overhaled the Schooner.

Low, who knew the Schooner & thought that since they had been separated, she might have fallen into the hands of honest Men, fired upon her & struck her the first Shot. Spriggs, seeing the Sloop fuller of Men than ordinary (for Low had been to Honduras, & had taken a Sloop & brought off several Baymen, & was now become an Hundred strong) & remaining still ignorant of his old Mate, refused to bring to, but continued to make off; and resolved if they came up with him, to fight them the best he could.

Thus the Harpies had like to have fallen fowl of one another. But Low, hoisting his Pirate Colours, discovered who he was; and then, hideous was the noisy Joy among the Piratical Crew on all sides, accompanied with Firing & Carousing, at the finding their Old Master & Companions, & their narrow Escape; and so

the design of Crusing upon the Coast of New-England came to nothing. A good Providence it was to my dear Country, that it did so; unless we could have timely succeeded in our design to surprize them.

Yet it had like to have proved a fatal Providence to those of us that had a hand in the Plot; for tho' our design of surprizing Spriggs and Company, when we should come upon the Coast of New-England, was carried with as much secrecy as was possible (we hardly daring to trust one another and mentioning it always with utmost privacy, and not plainly but in distant hints) yet now that Low appeared, Spriggs had got an account of it some way or other; and full of Resentment and Rage he goes aboard Low and acquaints him with what he called our Treacherous design, and says all he can to provoke him to Revenge the Mischief upon us and earnestly urged that we might be shot. But Low turned it off with a Laugh, and said he did not know, but if it had been his own case, as it was ours, he should have done so himself; and all that Spriggs could say was not able to stir up his Resentments and procure any heavy Sentence upon us.

Thus Low's merry Air saved us at that time; for had he lisped a Word in compliance with what Spriggs urged, we had surely some of us, if not all, have been lost. Upon this he comes on board the Schooner again, heated with Drink, but more chased in his own mind, that he could not have his Will of us, and swore & tore like a Madman, crying out that four of us ought to go forward & be shot; and to me in particular he said, You D—g, Ashton, deserve to be hang'd up at the Yards Arm for designing to cut us off. I told him I had no design of hurting any man on board, but if they would let me go away quietly I should be glad. This matter made a very great noise on board for several Hours, but at length the Fire was quenched.

The next Day Low ordered all into Roatan Harbour to clean, and here it was that I first gained Deliverance out of the Pirates hands; tho' it was a long while before my Deliverance was perfected, in a return to my Country and Friends; as will presently be related.

Roatan Harbour, as all about the Gulf of Honduras, is full of small Islands, which go by the General Name of the Keys. When we had got in here, Low and some of his Chief Men had got a shoar upon one of these small Islands, which they called Port-Royal Key, where they then made Booths, and were Carousing, Drinking and Firing, while the two Sloops, the *Rhode-Island*, and that which Low brought with him from the Bay were cleaning. As for the Schooner, he loaded her with Logwood which the Sloop brought from the Bay & gave her, according to promise, to one John Blaze, and put four men along with him in her and, when they came to Sail from this Place, sent them away upon their own account, and what became of them I know not.

Upon Saturday the 9th of March, 1723, the Cooper with Six hands in the Long-Boat were going ashore at the Watering place to fill their Casks; as he came along by the Schooner I called to him and asked him if he were going a shoar? he told me Yes; then I asked him if he would take me along with him; he seemed to hesitate at the first; but I urged that I had never been on shoar yet, since I first came on board, and I thought it very hard that I should be so closely confined when every one else had the Liberty of going a shoar, at several times, as there was occasion. At length he took me in, imagining, I suppose, that there would be no danger of my Running away in so desolate uninhabitated a Place as that was.

I went into the Boat with only an Ozenbrigs Frock and Trousers on and a Mill'd Cap upon my Head, having neither Shirt, Shoes, nor Stockings, nor any thing else about me; whereas, had I been aware of such an Opportunity but one-quarter of an Hour before, I could have provided my self something better. However, thought I, if I can but once get footing on Terra-Firma, tho' in never so bad Circumstances, I shall count it a

happy Deliverance; for I was resolved, come what would, never to come on board again.

Low had often told me (upon my asking him to send me away in some of the Vessels which he dismissed after he had taken them) that I should go home when he did, and not before, and Swore that I should never set foot on shoar till he did.

But the time for Deliverance was now come. God had ordered it that Low and Spriggs, and almost all the Commanding Officers, were a shoar upon an Island distinct from Koatan, where the Watering place was; He presented me in sight, when the Long Boat came by, (the only opportunity I could have had) He had moved the Cooper to take me into the Boat, and under such Circumstances as rendred me least lyable to Suspicion; and so I got a shoar.

When we came first to Land, I was very Active in helping to get the Casks out of the Boat & Rowling them up to the Watering place; then I lay down at the Fountain & took a hearty Draught of the Cool Water; & anon I gradually strol'd along the Beech, picking up Stones & Shells & looking about me; when I had got about Musket Shot off from them (tho' they had taken no Arms along with them in the Boat) I began to make up to the Edge of the Woods, when the Cooper spying me, call'd after me & asked me where I was going. I told him I was going to get some Coco-Nuts, for there were some Coco-Nut Trees just before me.

So soon as I had recovered the Woods and lost sight of them, I betook my self to my Heels & ran as fast as the thickness of the Bushes, and my naked Feet would let me. I bent my Course, not directly from them, but rather up behind them, which I continued till I had got a considerable way into the Woods, & yet not so far from them but that I could hear their talk, when they spake any thing loud; and here I lay close in a very great Thicket, being well assured if they should take the pains to hunt after me never so carefully they would not be able to find me.

After they had filled their Casks and were about to go off, the Cooper called after me to come away; but I lay snug in my Thicket and would give him no Answer, tho' I plainly eno' heard him. At length they set a hallooing for me, but I was still silent; I could hear them say to one another, the D—g is lost in the Woods and can't find the way out again; then they halloed again and cried, He is run-away and won't come again. The Cooper said if he had thought I would have served him so he would not have brought me a shoar.

They plainly saw it would be in vain to seek me in such hideous Woods and thick Brushes. When they were weary with hallooing, the Cooper at last, to shew his good Will to me, (I can't but Love and Thank him for his Kindness) call'd out, If you don't come away presently, I'll go off and leave you alone. But all they could say was no Temptation to me to discover my self, and least of all that of their going away and leaving me; for this was the very thing I desired, that I might be rid of them and all that belonged to them.

So finding it in vain for them to wait any longer, they put off with their Water without me; and thus was I left upon a desolate Island destitute of all help, and much out of the way of all Travellers.

However this Wilderness I looked upon as Hospitable and this Loneliness as good Company compared with the State and Society I was now happily Delivered from.

When I supposed they were gone off, I came out of my Thicket and drew down to the Water side, about a Mile below the Watering place, where there was a small run of Water; and here I sat down to observe their Motions, and know when the Coast was clear; for I could not but have some remaining fears lest they should send a Company of Armed Men after me. Yet I thought if they should, the Woods and Bushes were so thick that it would be impossible they should find me. As yet I had nothing to Eat, nor indeed were my Thoughts much concerned about

living in this Desolate Place, but they were chiefly taken up about my getting clear. And to my Joy, after the Vessels had stayed five Days in this Harbour, they came to Sail, and put out to Sea, and I plainly saw the Schooner part from the two Sloops, and shape a different Course from them.

When they were gone and the Coast clear, I began to reflect upon myself and my present Condition; I was upon an Island from whence I could not get off; I knew of no Humane Creature within many scores of Miles of me; I had but a Scanty Cloathing and no possibility of getting more. I was destitute of all Provision for my Support and knew not how I should come at any.

Every thing looked with a dismal Face; the sad prospect drew Tears from me in abundance; yet since God had graciously granted my Desires in freeing me out of the hands of the Sons of Violence, whose Business 'tis to devise Mischief against their Neighbour, and from whom every thing that had the least face of Religion and Virtue was intirely Banished (unless that Low would never suffer his Men to work upon the Sabbath; it was more devoted to Play, and I have seen some of them sit down to Read in a good Book), therefore I purposed to account all the hardship I might now meet with as Light & Easy compared with being Associated with them.

In order to find in what manner I was to Live for the time to come, I began to Range the Island over, which I suppose is some 10 or 11 Leagues Long, in the Latitude of 16 deg. 30 min. or thereabouts. I soon found that I must look for no Company, but the Wild Beast of the Field and the Fowl of the Air; with all of which I made a Firm Peace and God said Amen to it. I could discover no Footsteps of any Habitation upon the Island; yet there was one walk of Lime Trees near a Mile long, and ever now & then I found some broken Shreds of Earthen Pots, scattered here and there upon the Place, which some say are some remains of the Indians that formerly Lived upon the Island.

The Island is well Watered, and is full of Hills, high Mountains and lowly Vallies. The Mountains are Covered over with a sort of scrubby black Pine & are almost inaccessible. The Vallies abound with Fruit Trees, and so prodigiously thick with an underbrush that 'tis difficult passing.

The Fruit were Coco-Nuts, but these I could have no advantage from, because I had no way of coming at the inside. There are Wild-Figs and Vines in Abundance; these I chiefly lived upon, especially at first; there is also a sort of Fruit growing upon Trees somewhat larger than an Orange, of an Oval shape, of a brownish Colour without and red within, having two or three Stones about as large as a Walnut in the midst; tho' I saw many of these fallen under the Trees, yet I dared not to meddle with them for some time, till I saw some Wild Hogs eat them with safety, and then I thought I might venture upon them too, after such Tasters, and I found them to be a very delicious sourt of Fruit. They are called Mammees Supporters, as I learned afterwards. There are also a sort of small Beech-Plumb, growing upon low shrubs; and a large form of Plumb growing upon Trees, which are called Hog-Plumbs; and many other sorts of Fruit which I am wholly a Stranger to.

Only I would take notice of the Goodness of God to me, in preserving me from destroying my self by feeding upon any Noxious Fruit, as the Mangeneil Apple, which I often took up in my hands and look'd upon, but had not the power to eat of; which if I had, it would have been present Death to me, as I was informed afterwards, tho' I knew not what it was.

There are also upon this Island, and the Adjacent Islands and Keys, Deer and Wild Hogs; they abound too with Fowl of diverse sorts, as Ducks, Teil, Curlews, Galdings (a Fowl long Legged, and shaped somewhat like a Heron, but not so big), Pellicans, Boobys, Pigeons, Parrotts, &c. and the Shoars abound with Tortoise.

But of all this Store of Beast and Fowl

I could make no use to Supply my Necessities; tho' my Mouth often watered for a Bit of them, yet I was forced to go without it, for I had no Knife or other Instrument of Iron with me, by which to cut up a Tortoise, when I had turned it; or to make Snares or Pitts, with which to entrap, or Bows & Arrows with which to kill any Bird or Beast withal; nor could I by any possible means that I knew of come at Fire to dress any if I had taken them, tho' I doubt not but some would have gone down Raw if I could have come at it.

I sometimes had thoughts of Digging Pits and covering them over with small Branches of Trees & laying Brush and Leaves upon them to take some Hogs or Deer in; but all was vain imagination. I had no Shovel, neither could I find or make any thing that would answer my end, and I was presently convinced that my Hands alone were not sufficient to make one deep and large eno' to detain any thing that should fall into it; so that I was forced to rest satisfied with the Fruit of the Vine and Trees, and looked upon it as good Provision and very handy for one in my Condition.

In length of time, as I was poking about the Beech with a Stick to see if I could find any Tortoise Nests (which I had heard lay their Eggs in the Sand), I brought up part of an Egg clinging to the Stick, and upon removing the Sand which lay over them, I found near an Hundred & Fifty Eggs which had not been laid long eno' to spoil; so I took some of them and eat them. And in this way I sometimes got some Eggs to Eat, which are not very good at the best; yet what is not good to him that had nothing to Live upon but what falls from the Trees.

The Tortoise lay their Eggs above High Water Mark, in a hole which they make in the Sand, about a Foot or a Foot and half deep, and cover them over with the Sand, which they make as smooth & even as any part of the Beech, so that there is no discerning where they are, by any, the least sign of a Hillock or Rising; and according to my best observation, they Hatch in about 18 or 20 Days, and as soon as the Young Ones are Hatched they betake themselves immediately to the Water.

There are many Serpents upon this and the Adjacent Islands. There is one sort that is very Large, as big round as Man's Waist, tho' not above 12 or 14 Feet long. These are called Owlers. They look like old fallen Stocks of Trees covered over with a short Moss when they lye at their length; but they more usually lye coiled up in a round.

The first I saw of these greatly surprized me; for I was very near to it before I discovered it to be a Living Creature, and then it opened its Mouth wide eno' to have thrown a Hat into it; and blew out its Breath at me. This Serpent is very slow in its motion, and nothing Venemous, as I was afterwards told by a Man who said he had been once bitten by one of them.

There are several other smaller Serpents, some of them very Venemous, particularly one that is called a Barber's Pole, being streaked White and Yellow. But I met with no Rattle-Snakes there, unless the Pirates, nor did I ever hear of any other being there.

The Islands are also greatly infested with vexatious Insects, especially the Musketto, and a sort of small Black Fly, (something like a Gnat), more troublesome than the Musketto; so that if one had never so many of the comforts of Life about him, these Insects would render his Living here very burthensome to him; unless he retired to a small Key, destitute of Woods and Brush, where the Wind disperses the Vermin.

The Sea hereabouts hath a variety of Fish: Such as are good to Eat, I could not come at, and the Sharks and Alligators or Crocodiles I did not care to have any thing to do with; tho' I was once greatly endangered by a Shark, as I shall tell afterwards.

This was the Place I was confined to; this my Society and Fellowship; and this my State and Condition of Life. Here I spent near Nine Months, without

Converse with any Living Creature; for the Parrots here had not been taught to Speak. Here I lingered out one Day after another, I knew not how, without Business or Diversion; unless gathering up my Food, rambling from Hill to Hill, from Island to Island, gazing upon the Water and staring upon the Face of the Sky may be called so.

In this Lonely and Distressed Condition, I had time to call over my past Life; and Young as I was, I saw I had grown Old in Sin. My Transgressions were more than my Days; and tho' God had graciously Restrained me from the Grosser Enormities of Life, yet I saw Guilt staring me in the Face; eno' to humble me and forever to vindicate the Justice of God in all that I underwent.

I called to mind many things I had heard from the Pulpit, and what I had formerly Read in the Bible, which I was now wholly Destitute of, tho' I thought if I could but have one now, it would have sweetened my Condition, by the very Diversion of Reading, and much more from the Direction and Comfort it would have afforded me. I had some Comforts in the midst of my Calamity. It was no small Support to me that I was about my Lawful Employment when I was first taken; and that I had no hand in bringing my Misery upon my self, but was forced away sorely against my Will. It wonderfully alleviated my Sorrows, to think that I had my Parents approbation, and consent in my going to Sea; and I often fancied to my self that if I had gone to Sea against their will and pleasure and had met with this Disaster, I should have looked upon it as a designed Punishment of such Disobedience, and the very Reflection on it would have so aggravated my Misery, as soon to have put an end to my Days.

I looked upon my self also as more in the way of the Divine Blessing now than when I was linked to a Crew of Pirates, where I could scarce hope for Protection and a Blessing. I plainly saw very signal Instances of the Power & Goodness of God to me, in the many Deliverances which I had already experienced (the least of which I was utterly unworthy of) and this Encouraged me to put my Trust in Him; and tho' I had none but God to go to for help, yet I knew that He was able to do more for me than I could ask or think.

To Him therefore I committed my self, purposing to wait hopefully upon the Lord till he should send Deliverance to me, Trusting that in his own time and way He would find out means for my safe Return to my Father's House; and earnestly entreating that he would provide a better place for me.

It was my Daily Practise to Ramble from one part of the Island to another, tho' I had a more special Home near to the Water side. Here I had built me a House to defend me from the heat of the Sun by Day and the great Dews of the Night. I took some of the best Branches I could find fallen from the Trees and stuck them in the Ground, and I contrived as often as I could (for I built many such Huts) to fix them leaning against the Limb of a Tree that hung low; I split the Palmeto Leaves and knotted the Limb & Sticks together; then I covered them over with the largest and best Palmeto Leaves I could find. I generally Situated my Hut near the Water side, with the open part of it facing the Sea, that I might be the more ready upon the look out, and have the advantage of the Sea Breeze, which both the Heat and the Vermin required. But the Vermin, the Muskettos and Flys, grew so troublesome to me that I was put upon contrivance to get rid of their Company. This led me to think of getting over to some of the Adjacent Keys, that I might have some Rest from the disturbance of these busy Companions.

My greatest difficulty lay in getting over to any other Island, for I was but a very poor Swimmer; and I had no Canoo nor any means of making one. At length I got a piece of Bamboo, which is hollow like a Reed and light as a Cork, and made tryal of it under my Breast and Arms in Swimming by the shoar.

With this help I e'en ventured to put off for a small Key about Gun-shot off, and I reached it pretty comfortably. This Key was but about 3 or 400 Feet in compass, clear of Woods & Brush & lay very low; & I found it so free from the Vermin, by the free Passage of the Wind over it, that I seemed to be got into a New World, where I lived more at ease. This I kept as a place of Retreat whither I retired when the Heat of the Day rendred the Fly-kind most troublesome to me; for I was obliged to be much upon Roatan for the sake of my Food, Water & House. When I swam backward & forward from my Night to my Day Island I used to bind my Frock & Trousers about my Head, but I could not easily carry over Woods & Leaves to make a Hut of; else I should have spent more of my time upon my little Day Island.

My Swimming thus backward & forward exposed me to some Danger. Once I Remember as I was passing from my Day to my Night Island, the Bamboo got from under me e'er I was aware, & the Tide or Current set so strong that I was very difficultly put to it to recover the Shoar; so that a few Rods more distance had in all probability landed me in another World. At another time as I was Swimming over to my Day Island, a Shovel nos'd Shark, (of which the Seas thereabouts are full, as well as Alligators) struck me in the Thigh just as I set my Foot to Ground, & so grounded himself (I suppose) by the shoalness of the Water, that he could not turn himself to come at me with his Mouth, & so, thro' the Goodness of God, I escaped falling a prey to his devouring Teeth. I felt the Blow he gave me some hours after I had got ashoar.

By accustoming my self to Swim, I at length grew pretty dexterous at it, and often gave my self the Diversion of thus passing from one Island to another among the Keyes.

One of my greatest difficulties lay in my being Barefoot; my Travels backward & forward in the Woods to hunt for my Daily Food among the thick under-brush, where the Ground was covered with sharp Sticks & Stones, & upon the hot Beech among the sharp broken Shells, had made so many Wounds and Gashes in my Feet, & some of them very large, that I was hardly able to go at all.

Very often as I was treading with all the tenderness I could, a sharp Stone or Shell on the Beech or pointed Stick in the Woods would run into the Old Wounds, & the Anguish of it would strike me down as suddenly as if I had been shot thro', & oblige me to set down and Weep by the hour together at the extremity of my Pain; so that in process of time I could Travel no more than needs must, for the necessary procuring of Food. Sometimes I have sat leaning my Back against a Tree, with my Face to the Sea, to look out for the passing of a Vessel for a whole Day together.

At length I grew very Weak & Faint, as well as Sore and Bruised; and once while I was in this Condition a Wild Boar seemed to make at me with some Fierceness; I knew not what to do with my self, for I was not able to defend my self against him if he should attack me. So as he drew nearer to me I caught hold of the Limb of a Tree which was close by me & drew my Body up by it from the Ground as well as I could; while I was in this Hanging posture, the Boar came and struck at me, but his Tushes only took hold of my shattered Trousers & tore a peice out; and then he went his way. This I think was the only time that I was assaulted by any Wild Beast, with whom I said I had made Peace; and I look upon it as a Great Deliverance.

As my Weakness encreased upon me, I would often fall down as tho' struck with a dead sleep, and many a time as I was thus falling, and sometimes when I lay'd my self down to Sleep, I never expected to wake or rise more; and yet in the midst of all God had Wonderfully preserved me.

In the midst of this my great Soreness & Feebleness I lost the Days of the Week, & how long I had layn in some of my numb sleepy Fits I knew not, so that I was not able now to distinguish the

Sabbath from any other Day of the Week; tho' all Days were in some sort a Sabbath to me. As my Illness prevailed I wholly lost the Month, and knew not where abouts I was in the Account of Time.

Under all this Dreadful Distress I had no healing Balsames to apply to my Feet, no Cordials to revive my Fainting Spirits, hardly able now & then to get me some Figs or Grapes to Eat, nor any possible way of coming at a fire, which the Cool Winds & great Rains, beginning to come on now, called for. The Rains begin about the middle of October & continue for Five Months together, and then the Air is Raw Cold, like our North East Storms of Rain; only at times the Sun breaks out with such an exceeding Fierceness that there is hardly any enduring the Heat of it.

I had often heard of the fetching Fire by Rubbing of Two Sticks together, but I could never get any this way; tho' I had often tried while I was in Health and Strength, untill I was quite tired. Afterwards I learned the way of getting Fire from two Sticks, which I will Publish, that it may be of Service to any that may be hereafter in my Condition.

Take Two Sticks, the one of harder the other softer Wood, the dryer the better; in the soft Wood make a sort of Mortice or Socket; point the harder Wood to fit that Socket; hold the softer Wood firm between the Knees; take the harder Wood between your Hands with the point fixed in the Socket and rub the Stick in your Hands backward & forward briskly like a Drill, and it will take Fire in less than a Minute; as I have sometimes since seen, upon experiment made of it.

But then I knew of no such Method (and it may be should have been difficultly put to it to have formed the Mortice and Drill for want of a Knife) and I suffered greatly without a Fire, thro' the chillness of the Air, the Wetness of the Season and Living only upon Raw Fruit.

Thus I pass'd about Nine Months in this lonely, melancholy, wounded and languishing Condition. I often lay'd my self down as upon my last Bed & concluded I should certainly Dye alone, & no body knew what was become of me.

I thought it would be some relief to me if my Parents could but tell where I was; and then I thought their Distress would be exceeding great if they knew what I underwent. But all such thoughts were vain. The more my Difficulties encreased and the nearer prospect I had of Dying, the more it drove me upon my Knees and made me the more earnest in my Crys to my Maker for His favourable regards to me, and to the Great Redeemer to pardon me and provide for my after well being.

And see the surprizing Goodness of God to me, in sending me help in my time of trouble, & that in the most unexpected way & manner, as tho' an Angel had been commissioned from Heaven to relieve me.

Sometime in November, 1723, I espied a small Canoo coming towards me with one Man in it. It did not much surprize me. A Friend I could not hope for; and I could not resist or hardly get out of the way of an Enemy, nor need I fear one. I kept my Seat upon the Edge of the Beech. As he came nearer he discovered me & seemed great surprized. He called to me. I told him whence I was, & that he might safely venture a shoar, for I was alone, & almost Dead.

As he came up to me, he stared & look'd wild with surprize; my Garb & Countenance astonished him; he knew not what to make of me; he started back a little & viewed me more thorowly; but upon recovering of himself, he came forward & took me by the Hand & told me he was glad to see me. And he was ready as long as he stayed with me, to do any kind offices for me.

He proved to be a North-Britain, a Man well in Years, of A Grave and Venerable Aspect, and of a reserved Temper. His Name I never knew, for I had not asked him in the little time he was with me, expecting a longer converse with him; and he never told me it.

But he acquainted me that he had lived with the Spaniards 22 Years, and now they threatened to Burn him, I

knew not for what Crime; therefore he had fled for Sanctuary to this Place, & had brought his Gun, Ammunition and Dog, with a small quantity of Pork, designing to spend the residue of his Days here, & support himself by Hunting. He seemed very kind & obliging to me, gave me some of his Pork and assisted me all he could tho' he conversed little.

Upon the Third Day after he came to me, he told me he would go out in his Canoo among the Islands to kill some Wild Hogs & Deer and would have had me to go along with him. His Company, the Fire and a little dressed Provision something recruited my Spirits; but yet I was so Weak, and Sore in my Feet, that I could not accompany him in Hunting.

So he set out alone, and said he would be with me again in a Day or two. The Sky was Serene and Fair, and there was no prospect of any Danger in his little Voyage among the Islands, when he had come safe in that small Float near 12 Leagues; but by that time he had been gone an Hour there arose a most Violent Gust of Wind and Rain, which in all probability overset him; so that I never saw nor heard of him any more. And tho' by this means I was deprived of my Companion, yet it was the Goodness of God to me that I was not well eno' to go with him; for thus I was preserved from that Destruction which undoubtedly overtook him.

Thus after the pleasure of having a Companion almost Three Days, I was as unexpectedly reduced to my former lonely Condition, as I had been for a little while recovered out of it. It was grievous to me to think that I no sooner saw the Dawnings of Light after so long Obscurity, but the Clouds returned after the Rain upon me. I began to experience the Advantage of a Companion, and find that Two is better than One, and flattered my self that by the help of some fresh Hogs Grease I should get my Feet well and by a better Living recover more Strength.

But it pleased God to take from me the only Man I had seen for so many Months after so short a Converse with him. Yet I was left in better Circumstances by him than he found me in. For at his going away he left with me about Five Pound of Pork, a Knife, a Bottle of Powder, Tobacco Tongs and Flint, by which means I was in a way to Live better than I had done. For now I could have a Fire, which was very needful for me, the Rainy Months of the Winter; I could cut up some Tortoise when I had turned them, and have a delicate broiled Meal of it: So that by the help of the Fire, and dressed Food and the Blessing of God accompanying it, I began to recover more Strength, only my Feet remained Sore.

Besides, I had this Advantage now, which I had not before, that I could go out now and then and catch a Dish of Crab-Fish, a Fish much like a Lobster, only wanting the great Claws. My manner of catching them was odd: I took some of the best pieces of the old broken small Wood that came the nearest to our Pitch Pine, or Candle-Wood, and made them up into a small Bundle like a Torch, and holding one of these lighted at one End in one hand, I waded into the Water upon the Beech up to my Waist. The Crab-Fish, spying the Light at a considerable distance, would crawl away till they came directly under it, and then they would lye still at my Feet. In my other hand I had a Forked Stick with which I struck the Fish and tossed it a shoar. In this manner I supplyed my self with a Mess of Shell-Fish, which when roasted is very good Eating.

Between two and three Months after I had lost my Companion, as I was ranging a long shoar, I found a small Canoo. The sight of this at first renewed my Sorrows for his Loss; for I thought it had been his Canoo, and its coming ashore thus was a proof to me that he was lost in the Tempest: but upon further Examination of it I found it was one I had never seen before.

When I had got this little Vessel in possession, I began to think my self Admiral of the Neighbouring Seas, as well as Sole Possessor and Chief Commander

upon the Islands; and with the advantage hereof I could transport my self to my small Islands of Retreat much more conveniently than in my former Method of Swimming.

In process of time I tho't of making a tour to some of the more distant and larger Islands to see after what manner they were inhabited, and how they were provided, and partly to give my self the Liberty of Diversions. So I lay'd in a small parcel of Grapes and Figs, and some Tortoise, & took my Fire-Works with me, and put off for the island of Bonacco, an Island of about 4 or 5 Leagues long and some 5 or 6 Leagues to the Eastward of Roatan.

As I was upon my Voyage I discovered a Sloop at the Eastern End of the Island; so I made the best of my way and put in at the Western End; designing to travel down to them by Land, partly because there ran out a large point of Rocks far into the Sea, and I did not care to venture my self so far out in my little Canoo as I must do to head them, & partly because I was willing to make a better discovery of them, before I was seen by them; for in the midst of my most deplorable Circumstances, I could never entertain the thoughts of returning on board any Pirate, if I should have the opportunity, but had rather Live and Dye as I was.

So I haled up my Canoo and fastened her as well as I could and set out upon my Travel.

I spent two Days and the biggest part of two Nights in Travelling of it; my Feet were yet so sore that I could go but very slowly, and sometimes the Woods and Bushes were so thick that I was forced to Crawl upon my Hands and Knees for half a Mile together. In this Travel I met with an odd Adventure that had like to have proved fatal to me, and my preservation was an eminent instance of the Divine conduct and Protection.

As I drew within a Mile or two of where I supposed the Sloop might be, I made down to the Water side and slowly opened the Sea that I might not discover my self too soon. When I came down to the the Water side I could see no sign of the Sloop, upon which I concluded that it was gone clear while I spent so much time in Travelling.

I was very much tired with my long tedious March and sat my self down leaning against the Stock of a Tree facing to the Sea and fell a Sleep. But I had not slept long before I was awakened in a very surprizing manner, by the noise of Guns.

I started up in a fright and saw Nine Periaguas, or large Canooes, full of Men firing upon me. I soon turned about and ran as fast as my sore Feet would let me into the Bushes; and the Men, which were Spaniards, cryed after me, O Englishman, we'll give you good Quarter.

But such was the Surprize I had taken, by being awakened out of Sleep in such a manner, that I had no command of my self to hearken to their offers of Quarter, which it may be at another time under cooler thoughts I might have done. So I made into the Woods, and they continued Firing after me, to the Number of 150 small Shot at least, many of which cut off several small twigs of the Bushes along side of me as I went off.

When I had got out of the reach of their Shot, into a very great Thicket, I lay close for several Hours; and perceiving they were gone by the noise of their Oars in Rowing off, I came out of my Thicket and travelled a Mile or Two along the Water side, below the place where they Fired upon me, and then I saw the Sloop under English Colours, Sailing out of the Harbour with the Periaguas in tow; and then I concluded that it was an English Sloop that had been at the Bay, whom the Spaniards had met with and taken.

The next Day I went up to the Tree where I so narrowly Escaped being taken Napping, and there to my surprize I found 6 or 7 Shot had gone into the Body of the Tree, within a Foot or less of my Head as I sat down; & yet thro' the wonderful goodness of God to me, in the midst of all their Fire, and tho' I was as a Mark set up for them to shoot at, none of their Shot touched me. So did God as yet signally preserve me.

After this I Travelled away for my Canoo at the Western End of the Island, and spent near three Days e'er I reached it. In this Long March backward and forward I suffered very much from the soreness of my Feet & the want of Provision; for this Island is not so plentifully stored with Fruit as Roatan is, so that I was very difficultly put to it for my Subsistence for the 5 or 6 Days that I spent here; and besides the Musketoes and Black Flys were abundantly more numerous, and vexatious to me than at my old Habitation.

The Difficulties I met with here made me lay aside all thoughts of tarrying any time to search the Island. At length, much tired and spent I reached my Canoo, and found all safe there, to my great Joy; and then I put off for Roatan, which was a Royal Palace to me in comparison of Bonacco, where I arrived to my great Satisfaction about Ten a Clock at Night, & found all things as I left them.

Here I Lived (if it may be called living) alone for about Seven Months more, from the time of my loosing my North British Companion; and spent my time after my usual manner in Hunting for my Food and Ranging the Islands; till at length it pleased God to send some Company to me with whom I could Converse, and enjoy somewhat more of the Comforts of Life.

Sometime in June, 1724, as I was upon my small Island, where I often retired for Shelter from the pestering Insects, I saw two large Canooes making into the Harbour; as they drew near they saw the Smoak of the Fire which I had kindled, and wondring what it should mean came to a stand.

I had fresh in my Memory what I met with at Bonacco, and was very loth to run the risque of such another firing, and therefore stepped to my Canoo upon the back side of my small Island, not above 100 feet off from me, and immediately went over to my great Mansion, where I had places of safety to Shelter me from the Designs of an Enemy, and Rooms large and spacious eno' to give a kindly welcome to any ordinary number of Friends.

They saw me cross the Ferry of about Gun shot over, from my little to my great Island, and being as much afraid of Spaniards as I was of Pirates, they drew very cautiously towards the shoar. I came down upon the Beech, shewing my self openly to them, for their caution made me think they were no Pirates, and I did not much care who else they were.

However, I thought I could call to them and know what they were before I should be in much danger from their shot; and if they proved such as I did not like, I could easily retire from them. But before I called, they, who were as full of fears as I could be, lay upon their Oars and halloed to me, enquiring who I was and whence I came. I told them I was an English Man, and had Run away from the Pirates. Upon this they drew something nearer and enquired who was there besides my self; I assured them I was alone.

Then I took my turn, and asked them who they were and whence they came. They told me they were Bay-men, come from the Bay. This was comfortable News to me; so I bid them pull a shoar, there was no danger, I would stop for them. Accordingly they put a shoar, but at some distance from me, and first sent one Man a shoar to me; whom I went to meet. When the Man came up to me he started back, frighted to see such a Poor, Ragged, Lean, Wan, Forlorn, Wild, Miserable Object so near him; but upon recovering himself, he came and took me by the hand and we fell to embracing one another, he with surprize and wonder, I with a sort of Extasy of Joy.

After this was over he took me in his Arms and carried me down to their Canooes, where they were all struck with astonishment at the sight of me, were glad to receive me and expressed a very great tenderness to me.

I gave them a short History how I had escaped from Low and had lived here alone for Sixteen Months (saving three days), what hardship I had met with and what

danger I had run thro'. They stood amazed! They wondred I was alive and expressed a great satisfaction in it, that they were come to relieve me. And observing I was weak, and my Spirits low, they gave me about a Spoonful of Rhum to recruit my fainting Spirits.

This small quantity, thro' my long disuse of any Liquor higher Spirited than Water, and my present weakness, threw my Animal Spirits into such a violent Agitation as to obstruct their Motion, and produced a kind of Stupor, which left me for some time bereft of all Sense; some of them, perceiving me falling into such a strange Insensibility, would have given me more of the same Spirit to have recovered me; but those of them that had more wit would not allow of it. So I lay for some small time in a sort of a Fit, and they were ready to think that they should lose me as soon as they had found me. But I revived.

And when I was so thorowly come to my self as to converse with them, I found they were Eighteen Men come from the Bay of Honduras, the chief of which were John Hope and John Ford. The occasion of their coming from the Bay was a Story they had got among them that the Spaniards had projected to make a descent upon them by Water, while the Indians were to assault them by Land and cut off the Bay; and they retired hither to avoid the Destruction that was designed.

This John Hope and Ford had formerly, upon a like occasion, sheltered themselves among these Islands and lived for four Years together upon a small Island called Barbarat, about two Leagues from Roatan, where they had two Plantations, as they called them; and being now upon the same design of retreating for a time for Safety, they brought with them two Barrels of flower, with other Provisions, their Fire-Arms, Ammunition and Dogs for Hunting and Nets for tortoise, and an Indian Woman to dress their Provisions for them. They chose for their chief Residence a small Key about a quarter of a Mile Round, lying near to Barbarat, which they called the Castle of Comfort, chiefly because it was low and clear of Woods and Bushes, where the Wind had an open passage and drove away the pestering Muskettoes and Gnats. From hence they sent to the other Islands round about for Wood and Water and for Materials with which they Built two Houses, such as they were, for Shelter.

And now I seemed to be in a far more likely way to Live pretty tollerably than in the Sixteen Months past, for besides the having Company, they treated me with a great deal of Civility, in their way. They Cloathed me, and gave me a large sort of Wrapping Gown to Lodge in a Nights to defend me from the great Dews till their Houses were Covered; and we had plenty of Provisions. But after all they were Bad Company, and there was but little difference between them and the Pirates, as to their Common Conversation; only I thought they were not now engaged in any such bad designs as rendered it unlawful to Joyn with them, nor dangerous to be found in their Company.

In process of time, by the Blessing of God & the Assistance I received from them, I gathered so much strength that I was able sometimes to go out a Hunting with them. The Islands heareabouts, I observed before, abound with Wild Hogs and Deer and Tortoise.

Their manner was to go out a number of them in a Canoo, sometimes to one Island, sometimes to another, and kill what Game they could meet with, and Firk their Pork, by beginning at one end of a Hog and cutting along to the other end, and so back again till they had gone all over him, and flee the flesh in long strings off from the Bones; the Vension they took whole or in quarters and the Tortoise in like manner; and return home with a load of it. What they did not spend presently they hung up in their House a smoak drying; and this was a ready supply to them at all times.

I was now ready to think my self out of the reach of any danger from an

Enemy, for what should bring any here? And I was compassed continually with a Number of Men with their Arms ready at hand; and yet when I thought my self most secure, I very narrowly escaped falling again into the hands of the Pirates.

It happened about 6 or 7 Months after these Bay-men came to me that three Men and I took a Canoo with four Oars, to go over to Bonacco, a Hunting and to kill Tortoise. While we were gone the rest of the Bay-men haled up their canooes and Dryed and Tarred them, in order to go to the Bay and see how matters stood there and to fetch off their Effects which they had left behind them, in case they should find there was no safety for them in tarrying.

But before they were gone, we, who had met with good Success in our Voyage, were upon our return to them with a full load of Tortoise and Firkt Pork. As we were upon entering into the Mouth of the Harbour, in a Moon-light Evening, we saw a great Flash of Light and heard the report of a Gun, which we thought was much louder than a Musket, out of a large Periagua, which we saw near our Castle of Comfort.

This put us into a great Consternation, and we knew not what to make of it. Within a Minute or two we heard a Volley of 18 or 20 small Arms discharged upon the shoar, and heard some Guns also fired off from the shoar. Upon which we were satisfied that some Enemy, Pirates or Spaniards, were attacking our People and, being cut off from our Companions by the Periaguas which lay between us and them, we thought it our wisest way to save our selves as well as we could. So we took down our little Mast and Sail, that it might not betray us, and rowed out of the Harbour as fast as we could, thinking to make our Escape from them undiscovered, to an Island about a Mile and half off.

But they either saw us before we had taken our Sail down or heard the noise of our Oars as we made out of the Harbour, and came after us with all speed in a Periagua of 8 or 10 Oars. We saw them coming, & that they gained ground upon us apace, & therefore pull'd up for Life, resolving to reach the nearest shoar if possible.

The Periagua overhaled us so fast that they discharged a Swivel Gun at us, which over-shot us; but we made a shift to gain the shoar before they were come fairly within the reach of their small Arms; which yet they fired upon us, as we were getting a shoar.

Then they called to us, and told us they were Pirates and not Spaniards and we need not fear, they would give us good Quarter; supposing this would easily move us to surrender our selves to them. But they could not have mentioned any thing worse to discourage me from having any thing to do with them, for I had the utmost dread of a Pirate; and my first aversion to them was now strengthened with the just fears that if I should fall into their hands again, they would soon make a Sacrifice of me for my Deserting them.

I therefore concluded to keep as clear of them as I could; and the Bay-men with me had no great inclination to be medling with them, and so we made the best of our way into the Woods. They took away our Canoo from us, and all that was in it; resolving if we would not come to them, they would strip us, as far as they were able, of all means of Subsistence where we were.

I who had known what it was to be destitute of all things, and alone, was not much concerned about that, now that I had Company, and they their Arms with them, so that we could have a supply of Provision by Hunting and Fire to dress it with.

This Company, it seems, were some of Spriggs Men, who was Commander of the Schooner when I ran away from them. This same Spriggs, I know not upon what occasion, had cast off the Service of Low and set up for himself as the Head of a Party of Rovers, and had now a good Ship of 24 Guns and a Barmuda Sloop of 12 Guns under his Command, which were now lying in Roatan Harbour,

where he put in to Water and Clean, at the place where I first made my Escape.

He had discovered our People upon the small Island, where they Resided, and sent a Perigua full of Men to take them. Accordingly they took all the Men a shoar, and with them an Indian Woman and Child; those of them that were a shoar abused the Woman shamefully. They killed one Man after they were come a shoar and threw him into one of the Baymen Canooes where their Tar was, and set Fire to it and burnt him in it. Then they carried our People on Board their Vessels, where they were barbarously treated.

One of the Bay-men, Thomas Grande, turned Pirate, and he being acquainted that Old Father Hope (as we called him) had hid many things in the Woods, told the Pirates of it, who beat poor Hope unmercifully and made him go and shew them where he had hid his Treasure, which they took away from him.

After they had kept the Bay-men on board their Vessels for five Days, then they gave them a Flat of about 5 or 6 Tons to carry them to the Bay in, but they gave them no Provision for their Voyage; and before they sent them away they made them Swear to them not to come near us, who had made our Escape upon another Island.

All the while the Vessels rode in the Harbour we kept a good look out, but were put to some difficulties because we did not dare to make a Fire to dress our Victuals by, least it should discover where-abouts we were, so that we were forced to live upon Raw Provision for five Days. But as soon as they were gone, Father Hope with his Company of Bay-men (little regarding an Oath that was forced from them, and thinking it a wicked Oath, better broken, than to leave four of us in such a helpless Condition), came to us and acquainted us who they were, and what they had done.

Thus the watchful Providence of God, which had so often heretofore appeared on my behalf, again took special care of me, and sent me out of the way of danger. 'Tis very apparent that if I had been with my Companions at the usual Residence, I had been taken with them; and if I had, it is beyond question (humanely speaking) that I should not have escaped with Life, if I should the most painful and cruel Death, that the Madness and Rage of Spriggs could have invented for me; who would now have called to mind the design I was engaged in while we were parted from Low, as well as my final Deserting of them.

Now Old Father Hope and his Company were all designed for the Bay; only one John Symonds, who had a Negro belonging to him, purposed to tarry here for some time and carry on some sort of Trade with the Jamaica Men upon the the Main. I longed to get home to New-England and thought if I went to the Bay with them it was very probable that I should in a little while meet with some New-England Vessel that would carry me to my Native Country, from which I had been so long a poor Exile.

I asked Father Hope if he would take me with him and carry me to the Bay. The Old Man, tho' he seemed glad of my Company, yet told me the many Difficulties that lay in the way: as that their Flat was but a poor thing to carry so many Men in for near 70 Leagues, which they must go before they would be out of the reach of Danger; that they had no Provision with them and it was uncertain how the Weather would prove; they might be a great while upon their Passage thither, & their Flat could very poorly endure a great Sea; that when they should come to the Bay, they knew not how they should meet with things there, and they were Daily in Danger of being cut off; and it may be I should be longer there, in case all was well, than I cared for, e'er I should meet with a Passage for New-England; for the New-England Vessels often Sailed from the Bay to other Ports. So that all things considered, he thought I had better stay where I was, seeing I was like to have Company; whereas rather than I should be left alone he would take me in.

On the other hand, Symonds, who as I said designed to spend some time here, greatly urged me to stay and bear him Company. He told me that as soon as the Season would permit he purposed to go over to the Main to the Jamaica Traders, where I might get a Passage to Jamaica and from thence to New-England; probably quicker, and undoubtedly much safer than I could from the Bay; and that in the mean while I should fare as he did.

I did not trouble my self much about fareing, for I knew I could not fare harder than I had done; but I thought, upon the Consideration of the whole, that there seemed to be a fairer Prospect of my getting home by the way of Jamaica, than the Bay. And therefore I said no more to Father Hope about going with him, but concluded to stay. So I thanked Father Hope and Company for all their Civilities to me, wished them a good Voyage, and took leave of them.

And now there was John Symonds and I and his Negro left behind; and a good Providence was it for me that I took their Advice and stayed; for tho' I got not home by the way of Jamaica as was proposed, yet I did another and quicker way, in which there was more evident Interpositions of the Conduct of Divine Providence, as you will hear presently.

Symonds was provided with a Canoo, Fire-Arms and two Dogs, as well as a Negro; with these he doubted not but we should be furnished of all that was necessary for our Subsistence. With this Company I spent between two and three Months after the usual manner in Hunting and Ranging the Islands. And yet the Winter Rains would not suffer us to hunt much more than needs must.

When the Season was near approaching for the Jamaica Traders to be over at Main, Symonds proposed the going to some of the other Islands that abounded more with Tortoise that he might get the Shells of them and carry to the Traders, and in Exchange furnish himself with Ozenbrigs and Shoes and such other necessaries as he wanted.

We did so, and having got good store of Tortoise Shell, he then proposed to go first for Bonacco, which lies nearer to the Main than Roatan, that from thence we might take a favourable Snatch to run over.

Accordingly we went to Bonacco, and by that time we had been there about Five Days there came up a very hard North wind which blew exceeding Fierce, and lasted for about three Days; when the heaft of the Storm was over, we saw several Vessels standing in for the Harbour; their number and largeness made me hope they might be Friends; and now and opportunity was coming in which Deliverance might be offered to me.

The Larger Vessels came to Anchor at a great Distance off; but a Brigantine came over the Shoals, nearer in against the Watering place (for Bonacco as well as Roatan abounds with Water) which sent in her Boat with Cask for Water. I plainly saw they were Englishmen, and by their Garb & Air and number, being but three Men in the Boat, concluded they were Friends, and shewed my self openly upon the Beech before them. As soon as they saw me they stop'd rowing and called out to me to know who I was.

I told them, and enquired who they were. They let me know they were honest Men, about their Lawful Business. I then called to them to come a shoar, for there was no Body here that would hurt them. They came a shoar, and a happy meeting it was for me. Upon enquiry I found that the Vessels were the Diamond Man-of-War, and a Fleet under his Convoy, bound to Jamaica, (many whereof she had parted with in the late Storm) which by the violence of the North had been forced so far Southward, and the Man-of-War wanting Water, by reason of the Sickness of her Men which occasioned a great Consumption of it, had touched here and sent in the Brigantine to fetch off Water for her.

Mr. Symonds, who at first kept at the other end of the Beech, about half a Mile off (lest the three Men in the Boat should refuse to come a shoar, seeing two of us

together) at length came up to us and became a sharer in my Joy, and yet not without some very considerable reluctance at the Thoughts of Parting.

The Brigantine proved to be of Salem (within two or three Miles of my Father's House) Capt. Dove, Commander, a Gentleman whom I knew. So now I had the prospect of Direct Passage Home. I sent off to Capt. Dove, to know if he would give me a Passage home with him, and he was very ready to comply with my desire; and upon my going on Board him, besides the great Civilities he treated me with, he took me into pay, for he had lost a hand and needed me to supply his place.

The next Day the Man-of-War sent her Long Boat in, full of Cask, which they filled with Water, and put on Board the Brigantine, who carried them off to her. I had one Difficulty more to encounter with which was to take leave of Mr. Symonds, Who Wept heartily at parting; but this I was forced to go thro' for the Joy of getting home.

So the latter end of March 1725 we came to Sail, and kept Company with the Man-of-War, who was bound to Jamaica. The first of April we parted and, thro' the good hand of God upon us, came safe thro' the Gulf of Florida to Salem-Harbour, where we arrived upon Saturday-Evening, the first of May: two Years, Ten Months and Fifteen Days after I was first taken by the Pirate Low; and Two Years and near two Months after I had made my Escape from him upon Roatan Island. I went the same Evening to my Father's House, where I was received as one coming to them from the Dead, with all Imaginable Surprize of Joy.

An Indian Ocean Mystery

By N. TOURNEUR

ST. PAUL'S, the southernmost of those twin islands which frown in solitary grandeur in the middle of the Indian Ocean as reminders of the lost continent beneath, is best known today as having a food depot for castaway crews. Unfortunately, the seal poachers from the islands around Madagascar have a fondness for despoiling and rifling the contents of the thatched hut of rough stones; as the shipwrecked crew of the S. S. *Parisiana*, and of others, have discovered in the crisis of their necessities. St. Paul's appears to have a fascination for Frenchmen, for was not its mysterious "king" of that nationality—and his consort and retinue?

His is one of the unsolved mysteries of the sea. It has all the elements of dramatic romance—and tragedy. A solitary island; a handsome nineteenth-century picaroon, well educated and carrying the stamp of an aristocrat to his finger-tips; a beautiful half-witted lady about thirty-five; two other Frenchmen, a half-caste boy, and fourteen black Malagasy, most of them turbulent and untrustworthy.

The island of St. Paul's, which is the crater of an extinct volcano, runs some ten miles in length and four to five in width. The crater forms a somewhat circular lagoon, the entrance to which is marked by a conspicuous sugar-loaf rock some two hundred feet high. Seldom is the island visited, though lying direct in the track of the Australian and South Sea trades.

A relative of the present writer put in there early in the Fifties of last century and found it was occupied as related above. His request for vegetables and leave to fill water barrels were rather reluctantly granted. But the captain, as his people styled him, made amends by an invitation to a breakfast composed of cheese, potatoes, roast fowl, biscuit, rum and cognac. Later, the French aristocrat, making free with the brandy, related that he too had followed the sea, having been engaged in the trade between Réunion (Bourbon, it was then), the Mauritius, Zanzibar and the Cape of Good Hope, with an occasional voyage to the East Indies. Getting into trouble too often with the French Revenue and other officials, he had fled to the island in a sixty-ton schooner manned by Malagasy, and had set up a petty sovereignty.

By means of a system of rigid discipline he had contrived to keep his unruly blacks quiet and orderly, and had trained them to regular work—fisheries, sealing, rearing herds of goats, raising crops of vegetables and other small enterprises. The produce of the fisheries and sealing was exported three or four times a year to the Cape or the Mauritius by means of the schooner then at sea. He had had of late considerable trouble with his wild followers, slavery having been abolished among the French and the free men lusting to enjoy liberty other than that on St. Paul's. There the soothing luxuries for them were biscuit and tobacco and an occasional sip of liquor—unprocurable at that time until the schooner's return.

The presence of the lady had lighted smoldering fires also, and in more than black breasts. Anxiously and impatiently was the return of trustworthy men in the schooner being awaited by the captain of St. Paul's. He refused to divulge his name, but spoke excellent English and referred to a stay in London.

When some months later the skipper again called at the island all was desolation and loneliness. The charred and ruined huts and the semblance of some graves near-by, the scattered remains of slain animals and general débris where had stood the settlement, told their tale.

Of its details no man has ever known.

Beginning a serial of

Cockades

CHAPTER I

THE LEGEND

NOT very many years ago, in an ancient house on Commerce Street in New York City, there died in his old age the last descendant of the Moore family, formerly of Moore Mansion in the village of Greenwich. An old gentleman of nearly ninety who persistently, it seems, and with a surviving pride in the midst of his humilities remembered what he believed to be a fact—that in his boyhood in the late 1830's he had been taken to see in a residence on St. John's Park, a quite aged gentleman distantly related to him, in whose person and under the disguise of whose American name stood concealed that mysterious individual known to history as Louis XVII of France.

"I saw him in his big chair," the old gentleman of Commerce Street would insist. "He had a medal on a blue riband and everybody knew that he was the rightful King of France."

The notion of such a thing in the twentieth century was incredible, absurd. People smiled and shook their heads. Louis XVII, so called—Charles Louis the Dauphin of France, son of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette—died in the Temple dungeon in Paris on June 8, 1795, at three o'clock in the afternoon, in his eleventh year. The matter was one of official record whatever tradition might have to whisper of clothes baskets and escapes and substitutions. It was an old man's fantasy to say that the Dauphin was living in New York City fifty years later.

That the old gentleman of Commerce Street was found at his death to have in his possession various curious trinkets, said to have descended to him from that other distant family branch—a foreign decoration on a crumpled blue riband, a very antique seal ring showing three dolphins for a crest, a plain gold locket on a chain bearing on the inside, after one had pried it open, the royal Bourbon arms and a miniature of a boy's head which did resemble that of the Dauphin—this was simply an aggravating circumstance, one of those silly coincidences upon which legend is nourished. That a locket bearing the royal arms of France was found in a house on Commerce Street did not render it any the less impossible for the child of the Temple prison ever to have lived in a house on St. John's Park.

But half a century or so before the death in Commerce Street the thing was not so impossible of belief. It was, one learns with amused bewilderment from a multitude of contemporary records, most implicitly believed by the entire community of the village of Greenwich. The gentleman of St. John's Park had

A Royal Citizen of a New Republic

By MEADE MINNIGERODE

long before that resided at Brook Field not far from the Minetta Brook which skirted Colonel Burr's Richmond Hill. And the gentleman of St. John's Park, history to the contrary, was Charles Louis, Dauphin of France. The whole of Greenwich Village believed that and passed it on to its children without excitement and with very little surprize. The King of France, the boy who should have been king, had come to live in Greenwich Village. Why not?

Of course there were discrepancies, little confusions of names and dates varying from street to street and family to family, but the fundamental conviction was unchanged. Until its dismantling, to allow the erection of a warehouse on its site, the oldest inhabitants could point out the neglected French graveyard and in it the tombstone with nothing on it except a crown and the words "Charles Louis." The grave of the gentleman of St. John's Park, so they insisted. And the stone is not a myth; there still exist photographs of it, although the strange inscription seems unduly indistinct for its age.

But with the death of the old gentleman of Commerce Street the legend of the Dauphin of France, already widely forgotten, now also expired.

THE legend expired, the public knowledge of it, the popular belief in it; but things kept turning up. Letters, documents, tag-ends of family lore, flotsam of an ancient adventure cast up in various places to corroborate the earlier credulity. Astonishing references to incidents which could not have taken place at all unless a greater improbability had actually occurred. These perplexing challenges to common sense and accepted fact kept accumulating.

And names kept recurring, names of persons who had inhabited the background of the legend during its lifetime. Roger Moore, of Moore Mansion, foremost merchant in his day of the Tontine Coffee House, and his sister Abigail. Stephen Jumel, the big Frenchman from Santo Domingo, in his residence on Whitehall Street; the gentleman who during his sojourn in Paris after the return of the Bourbons was so anxious to have his wife attend in person to the destruction of some of the records in his New York office. Aaron Burr, the little man of Richmond Hill, who was so fond of entertaining the French refugees from Philadelphia. Citizen Genêt, the first Minister from republican France to the United States, whose sisters had all been ladies in waiting to Marie Antoinette and whose coach upon his departure from Paris to join the frigate which was to take him to America was stopped at the

barriers and searched because it was thought that he had the Dauphin with him. Names of contemporaries who seemed to have shared a certain knowledge. And behind them all, curtained from sight by their prudent discretion and yet occasionally visible between the folds of their mutual reticence, the significant presence of that gentleman from Sweden, the Count Axel de Fersen.

More than that. His own handwriting above his unquestioned signature, in a very old letter found among the effects in the house on Commerce Street. There it was, a companion piece to the famous one, recently sold at Sotheby's in London, containing the curious reference to the young man at New York. And in the Commerce Street letter Mr. de Fersen had written:

> *Monsieur, this package contains certain heirlooms of your family and certain documents relative to your ancestry which I believe it is your right to be made aware of. A good many years will have passed before they come into your hands and you will be the best judge then of their significance.*
>
> *Whatever surprize they may occasion you,"* it went on, "*I beg you to rest assured that to my personal and positive knowledge you, Francis Vincent, so called, are the person referred to in these papers,*
>
> *Your devoted servitor,*
> *Axel de Fersen.*

Was the letter to accompany those trinkets, that medal on a blue riband, that ancient seal ring, that locket which it was so difficult to open? It was dated in 1794, during the Terror, at Nantes in France.

It would not have been so startling, this letter, if it were not for the invincible effect of that signature upon the human imagination. One does not read that name without a quickening of the pulse, an instinctive response to the glamorous personality which it represents. Axel de Fersen. The young nobleman of eighteen who in 1774 at a masked ball in Paris had attracted the notice of the equally youthful Marie Antoinette of France and had seen for the first time that unfortunate Lady whom he was never to forget and who was herself never to forget him. "Beau" Fersen of Rochambeau's staff at Yorktown, negotiating the surrender of Cornwallis. Axel de Fersen in his coachman's disguise driving the royal family away from the palace of the Tuileries on the first stage of that night of joyful escape in June, 1791 which was to terminate in the disaster of recapture at Varennes in the Argonne. Axel de Fersen in Sweden afterward and in Paris at great risk of his life toiling until the last breathless moments of her execution on October 16, 1793, for the Queen's rescue. And after that again in 1794 at Nantes writing that strange letter which was to find its way to the old house on Commerce Street in New York.

The name is endowed with a vast magic. The personality which it covers is symbolic of a deathless allegiance to a single cause. The occurrence of it anywhere is inseparable from the fate of certain members of that royal house—the Queen first, and after her the boy of the Temple prison, the Son of France.

BUT he had died, that boy, died in 1795, in squalor and disease. A blue-eyed, flaxen-haired child. Well, had he? His sister, the little Madame Royale who occupied the chambers above his in the tower, had not been sent for. She had not been allowed to see her brother for months. The identification of the corpse required by law had been hastily performed in the middle of the night by officials who had never known the Dauphin. And even then the face had been purposely disfigured. These matters are known, however concealed. A boy had died in one of the cells of the Temple, but was it that boy?

As a matter of fact was it even the boy whom Robespierre had removed in secret

from the prison and then brought back again because after careful scrutiny and examination he was obviously not the Dauphin? These matters too are known. Was it actually a substitute for that substitute, as is often now supposed? Historically it does not matter any more. A boy died, Louis XVII was buried, nothing remained except a succession of claimants during the Restoration, all of them impostors. But the boy whom Robespierre removed from the Temple for a night, imagining him to be the Dauphin, was not the Dauphin. The old fox knew it and wisely held his tongue. In a few months he was dead.

The real boy, smuggled somehow out of the Temple, very possibly in the traditional clothes basket, was in Brittany—"the little fellow in the green suit"—in the midst of those royalist generals of the Vendée insurrection whose aristocratic whim it was to dress all in white from their boots to their feathered hats, and to wear on their sleeves the badge of the crimson heart surmounted by a cross—the Duke de Colignac, the Duke de Savenay, the Duke de la Roche, Mr. de la Motte, some of whom came subsequently to America. The gentlemen who adopted the rallying cry of that forlorn royalist uprising—

"Hoo—hoo—hoo!" The owl's call of those deep Brittany woods.

And then in 1794 the boy died of pneumonia.

There it is. Paris and Brittany, Commerce Street and St. John's Park—it does not matter and Axel de Fersen's name on an old letter must not betray one into a sentimental credulity, for the real Dauphin died in 1794, a whole year before his wretched understudy. It was silly to insist otherwise.

And then at long intervals some documents came to light to mock these certainties—some extraordinary documents, in addition to a number of scattered letters: The journals of Roger and Abigail Moore, found curiously enough, among the records of St. John's, Varick Street; the papers and diaries of Raoul de Vendome—that young Count de Vendome who was refugeed as a boy at Philadelphia, in 1794—discovered at the Château of Vendome in France and saved only by the most fortunate accident from careless destruction; a series of reports sent from America by a certain Number Seventeen and his predecessor Ducros, unearthed in the archives of the French secret police of the First Consulate and Empire.

It is with the contents of these documents that the following pages are concerned.

CHAPTER II

RUM AND UPROAR

IT ALL begins on the early morning of August 1, 1793.

The summer mists were lifting with the sun; Long Branch and the Jersey coast were barely visible at the horizon's edge from the deck of the little schooner *Rambler* from Santo Domingo. Out on the intervening water—not so far offshore that they could not hear the boom of the guns from the beach and aboard the river boats which had accompanied the French frigate down New York Bay—Citizen Bompard of the *Embuscade* in his red liberty cap and striped breeches was pouring a murderous fire into His British Majesty's frigate *Boston*.

"*Vive la République!*" his long-haired, red-shirted, smoke-grimed sailors roared, and the *Boston's* main topmast came ripping and crashing down on to her bloody decks in a tangle of rigging cluttering up her blue upperworks.

Captain Courtney was dead, killed early in the engagement, destined never to know the outcome of his challenge for this meeting off Sandy Hook posted so gaily a few days before on the notice board of the Tontine Coffee House at New York, where they kept the crimson silk liberty cap with the white "torsels" on the wall. The *Boston* turned and fled, spreading every possible foot of canvas to supplement her shot-riddled sails, the *Embuscade* behind her, crowding on her

royals, the sun glinting on the gilded ax emblems at her stern.

"It's the French frigate brought Citizen Genêt over to Charleston in April," the *Rambler's* captain told his people. "The new French Minister. Guess she's got the cocked hats on the run."

He appeared tremendously pleased—every one in America, almost, seemed to have gone into hysterics of admiration for the French Revolution and Citizen Genêt's progress up the seaboard had been a pandemonium of "republican" festivities and "fraternal hugs"—but to one at least of the *Rambler's* passengers the view of the victorious revolutionary frigate brought only disgust and hatred. He explained it all afterward to Roger Moore. To Stephen Jumel, only just escaped from the massacres and horrors of the slave insurrections in Santo Domingo—insurrections nourished by these new principles of liberty and equality which were spreading through the French dominions—the very thought of the Terrible Republic, "One and Indivisible," as they called it, was a nightmare.

A flame-illumined nightmare of pounding drums and unspeakable processions, of ghastly cruelties in a green land turned crimson with blood. Stephen Jumel could not forget. The flight from the d'Aurelles' plantation with the little d'Aurelle girl and her aunt, after the parents had been slaughtered, the midnight ride across country to warn the d'Avezacs and their sister, Madame de Lassy—the young widow who was later, at New Orleans, to become the wife of Edward Livingston—with whom they left the child, the plunge into the jungle for the dash to the coast. The hunger, and thirst and panic of that dreadful journey.

THE *Rambler* continued on her course, leaving the battle astern and heading for Sandy Hook. In front of her, swinging in from the open sea, a French fleet of fifteen ships of the line swept majestically into the Lower Bay, all flags flying and the red liberty caps at the masthead. A squadron from France, come to join the English war in these waters, assuming an American welcome which carried with it nothing of President Washington's chilly proclamations of neutrality.

Up to the Bay went the *Rambler*, preceded by a flotilla of river boats which had followed the *Embuscade* to her duel, packed with Republican citizenry cheering themselves hoarse at the prospect of countless wagers successfully laid against the Federalists on the books of every Coffee House in town, and now returning with tidings of the victory in time to escort the French fleet with prolonged outcries of joy. On the Battery, around the Churn, under the elms and in front of the barbette, an enormous crowd had collected, drawn together by rumors of the fight and of the French squadron's arrival. An American crowd dressed in the extreme French republican styles, the men with their hair cut straight across the forehead *à la Brutus*, solemnly addressing each other as Citizen and Citizeness and wearing French tricolor cockades in their hats.

"Cockades! Tricolor cockades!" The cry of the hawkers arose continuously above the tumult of that assemblage in whose presence any Federalist, from George Washington to Roger Moore, would have been hissed and hooted at as an aristocrat, a monarchist and an Anglo-maniac. Such was the temper of American crowds in that year of "civic pageants," of liberty poles, of theatrical performances of "The Demolition of the Bastille," of toasts to the Gallo-Columbian Fraternity of Freemen and the death of the Hydra of Despotism, of public parades to the slaughter house of the Ox of Aristocracy and of waxworks of the execution of Louis XVI.

The French ships of the line dropped their anchors, their batteries booming out a salute to the port amid a delirium of cheering from the shore. The news of the *Embuscade's* victory was spreading with a roar. Already a street poet had climbed up on a barrel and was composing

a ballad, for in the America of 1793 nothing ever happened without ballads.

"—but vain was his haste, and vain was his speed,
He ended the fray in a chase;
The Gaul had the best of the fight, 'tis agreed,
The Briton the best of the race!"

The French Admiral and his staff came ashore and were taken to Government House to see Mr. Clinton. The crowds yelled and sang and went surging in and out of taprooms filling themselves and every French sailor they could find with rum-bullion, black-strap and bellows-top flip. In the midst of it all the *Embuscade* herself returned and the town went wild. Cockades and the "Marseillaise," drunken sailors, rum and uproar.

On such a day it was that Stephen Jumel landed in New York.

He had stayed aboard the *Rambler* all afternoon, for the town seemed to have gone mad over this *Embuscade* affair and he knew himself entirely too well. With his rash temper, if he went ashore and mixed with the republican crowds he would only do something stupid and find himself in trouble.

"I had not escaped from a massacre to be hit over the head in a street brawl!" he explained to Roger Moore later.

Along toward evening, when the commotion appeared to have subsided a little, he asked his way of the captain and went ashore to find the Moore residence. For this was at the time his only plan, to put himself in touch with Roger Moore, with whose mercantile firm he had done business for years in Santo Domingo, and to seek his help in establishing himself in New York as an importer of what the gazette notices called "wines and choice fluids." Otherwise he was minded to go to Philadelphia and appeal to Stephen Girard, whose brother he had known quite well at the Cape.

Jumel had already turned into Whitehall Street, picking his steps through the filth of slime and dead cats which seemed to fill the narrow roadways of this precious republican city and looking for the name-plates on the houses, when a group of sailors came careening down the sidewalk upon him. They were French, and gloriously drunk, singing at the top of their lungs. One of them lurched toward him as he stepped aside and seized him by the sleeve.

"Good evening, citizen!" he shouted amiably in French. "You're not wearing a tricolor cockade! Why are you not wearing a tricolor cockade? Permit me to give you a tricolor cockade and then we shall embrace like brothers."

Stephen Jumel was a very tall, enormously powerful man in his thirties. He sent the fellow flying into the gutter.

"Pig!"

In an instant the man's companions were on top of him, cursing and screaming, fists in the air. Jumel took to his heels up the street. No time to look for the name-plates now. The men were after him roaring bloody murder, his interlocutor loudest of all, with his face smeared with mud and a long knife gleaming in his hand. Jumel ran for his life. At any moment other sailors attracted by the noise might come to intercept him. Suddenly, near a street corner, a door opened slightly as he approached. A voice called to him—

"Quickly, sir, in here!"

Jumel tumbled up the steps and across the threshold. The door slammed behind him. The drunken pursuit passed noisily up the street.

He turned and saw a little girl of six or seven staring at him. One knows that she was an amazingly pretty little girl, rosy-cheeked, with great dark blue eyes and black ringlets, dressed ordinarily in white dimity.

And who was she, Jumel asked her in his inadequate English, that he might thank her?

"I'm Polly Moore," she told him.

Except as an indication of the disorderly state of the community at that time, the incident would not be of any great importance but for this fact: The drunken sailor whom Jumel had angrily hustled off the sidewalk, and who was never to forget the injury to his breeches

in that dirty gutter, was that pock-marked, broken-nosed, gimlet-eyed individual so frequently referred to in these chronicles as "the man Ducros." And the man Ducros was not a sailor at all, one soon learns, but a corporal in the National Guard of Paris, a former sentry at the Temple prison, and now, in America, a secret agent of the Committee of Public Safety sent over to watch the movements of Citizen Genêt. A nasty customer.

ROGER MOORE was then in his forty-fifth year, florid, well-rounded, meticulously ruffled and silver-buckled, somewhat pompous in his manner; the typical merchant prince—prosperous, solid, dignified; an influential member of the Coffee House conclave of Bayards and Le Roys and Gracies who controlled the shipping enterprises of the port; a man of great wealth and social position, firmly established in the innermost Federalist circles of the Jays and Schuylers and Morrises and, when he chose to invade Republican homes, of the Clintons and Livingstons; a kindly, honest, generous soul, with a peppery temper and a passion for hot muffins.

A veteran of the Revolutionary War, he had known Axel de Fersen intimately at Yorktown and for some time thereafter. Married soon after the surrender, he had lost his wife when their little daughter Polly was only three years old. It was the one romance of his life, and he had settled down in the great empty house on Whitehall Street with his maiden sister Abigail installed at the head of his table to do the honors of his hospitable home—and now of the new mansion at Greenwich—and to undertake the management of the little girl.

Quite arduous duties Abigail Moore performed with considerable grace and unvarying good humor. She was a plump little woman with an unfortunate nose and a set of implanted front teeth, relic of a visit to Philadelphia in the days when the fashionable mania for Dr. La Mayeur's dental transfers was all the rage in the Quaker City. Otherwise one suspects her chief treasure to have been the recollection of a certain minuet dance at Annapolis with "Beau" Fersen.

Such was the household into which Stephen Jumel had come stumbling so breathlessly on the evening of August 1, 1793.

They made him very welcome, kept him at the house until he was able to settle down at Mrs. Loring's boarding-house on Broadway, found a place for him temporarily in the Moore counting-room and took him along to Greenwich with them when the yellow fever epidemic of that summer sent them all hurrying out of town.

All that Roger Moore asked of a man was that he should be a gentleman and discharge his affairs of honor punctiliously, that he should be honest and if possible entertaining, and that he should be a Federalist. He must approve of the Bank, hold Alexander Hamilton in high esteem and read the *United States Gazette*. He must also be a devoted admirer of President Washington, despise the Franco-Jacobin Republican party—Lady Washington's "filthy democrats"—and have only the deepest contempt for its leader.

"Mr. Jefferson," he was always thundering, "is a dangerous demagogue who chooses to believe that George Washington is planning to make himself king because he rides in a coach. Whenever George Washington puts on his hat Mr. Jefferson mistakes it for a crown, and whenever John Adams sits down in his armchair Mr. Jefferson thinks it's a throne."

To which Abigail would almost always reply—

"Tut, tut, Roger!"

It was all Greek to Jumel, but Jacobinism was not his failing and he would not have been seen dead in the Indian Queen tavern. In other respects he was obviously a man of refinement and education. He danced "divinely" at the City Hotel Assemblies. He learned to play "Queen Mary's Lament" on one of John Jacob Astor's imported German

flutes. He was soon extremely popular.

He was not at all aware of the fact that the man Ducros was always watching him.

In the midst of his returning prosperity there was one thing which worried him greatly, a matter involving certain persons at Nantes, in France, which gave him the deepest concern. He went finally to Roger Moore and told him the whole thing.

It was in the fall of 1792 that a cipher had come to him, forwarded by his family in Bordeaux, followed by a letter from a Mr. Picard asking him if he could undertake to send a ship to Nantes, ostensibly in course of ordinary trade but actually for the purpose of taking aboard some passengers for America, upon receipt of a prearreanged message.

"Today we saw three dolphins in the bay." That was the message which would signify to him that it was time to send the ship.

Jumel had not been deceived by this cumbersome passenger arrangement. An escape was being prepared for some one, and the people who were planning it, perhaps long in advance, were not in a position to command a ship in France. They must count on one from elsewhere. The cipher letters had reached him during the lull between the two slave insurrections and he had promptly agreed to do his part.

"The recent events in Santo Domingo had served to interest me in all refugees!" he reminded Roger Moore.

But he had received no further news from France. And then the nightmare had begun again in Santo Domingo. He had written no letters, none had reached him. A fugitive through the forests, he had wandered for weeks with a few companions until he had stumbled out on to a beach, to be picked up at last in answer to his frantic signals by the passing *Rambler*.

"I know what it means to wait for a ship," he explained to his friend. "We spent days hiding in the forest, watching the water. That was after we had become separated from Madame de Lassy and the little d'Aurelle girl and their party. They tried to reach Jacmel, and the two d'Avezac men were killed, I think. Three ships went by without noticing us. We ran after them through the sand, crying and gesticulating. It was dreadful."

But he must write to France at once, Roger Moore advised him. Tell them what had happened and arrange for another ship if necessary.

"But I have no money now for ships," Jumel again reminded him.

Money? Pepper corns! Write at once, and a Moore ship would go.

Jumel wrote but he heard nothing, and in his mind he associated this silence with the disasters which had overtaken the royalist army of the Vendée toward the close of 1793, when Mr. de Colignac and Mr. de la Roche had been so badly beaten at Savenay on the Loire. Mr. Picard, whoever he might be, had probably been killed.

And then one morning in the early fall of 1794 Jumel received a letter from France, from Mr. Picard, which he showed to Roger Moore. A quite ordinary letter concerning domestic matters of no importance. Even the last paragraph seemed to have no special significance.

> *We are having very fine weather, and the children are always begging to be taken sailing. Today we saw three dolphins in the bay, quite close up, and you can imagine the excitement—*

Today we saw three dolphins in the bay! —*and you can imagine our excitement!* Roger Moore wrote in his journal—

> *I'm sending the brig* Nancy, *Captain Delacroix, ostensibly chartered to Jumel for a return cargo of wines. She is the fastest vessel I can lay my hands on at the moment. The captain is taking his wife with him, the beautiful Betsy one hears so much about. We've ordered everything as secretly as possible, but I suppose it's all over the waterfront by now, from the Battery to Cherry Lane.*

"The beautiful Betsy—" the sentence is of quite special interest, for it constitutes perhaps the first contemporary reference to the celebrated lady, Betsy Bowen Delacroix, who was so soon to become Madame Jumel and long years later Madame Burr. The lady whom Jumel had not originally intended to marry at all and to whom he was obliged to entrust the urgent destruction of those intriguing and unknown records in his office, mention of which has already been made. A lady who, according to one private statement regarding her charms, "was not badly put together."

As for the waterfront and its knowledge of the *Nancy's* departure upon a special voyage, Roger Moore was right in his supposition. From Borden's Wharf to the Exchange Slip, all up and down South Street and around Constable's and "Coonchy's," shiny-hatted sailors were talking. It was a special envoy from President Washington to the French Republic. It was Citizen Genêt going home. It was somebody important being brought to America. The taverns were full of rumors.

And some of them reached Ducros, for he reported them to the French authorities. And he did more than that. He carried his harvest of gossip to Citizen Genêt himself, who was not going home at all since he was in New York, at Government House, preparing to marry Governor Clinton's daughter. The former Citizen Minister—for he had been relieved of his mission and replaced by Citizen Fauchet—was at his supper of stewed oysters and tea when Ducros came to him. The former Citizen Minister was apparently not interested in the gossip.

"He called me an imbecile," Ducros recorded, "and abused me for disturbing him. He kept telling me that he was a private citizen now and that the official affairs of the Republic were of no concern to him. That I should go to Citizen Fauchet at Philadelphia, and that in the meantime I should go to the devil. He is a dirty aristocrat and should have been guillotined long ago."

At all events, the former Citizen Minister—whose sisters had all been ladies in waiting to Marie Antoinette—was not interested in Ducros' rumors. There is nothing so very surprizing about that. What is surprizing and has never been explained is that on that same evening Jumel received an anonymous and untraced note preserved among Roger Moore's papers, which, if any reliance is to be placed in the characteristics as now known of the man's handwriting, was written by Citizen Genêt. It was a short note:

Take care. There are those who watch.

But the *Nancy* had already sailed.

CHAPTER III

TRICOLOR COCKADES

IN NEW YORK during the days that followed there was something else to think about besides the *Nancy*. American commerce was being strangled. Seizures, detentions, piracies, British frigates, Spanish picaroons and, for that matter, French privateers—from Boston to the West Indies there was no end to it. And President Washington, if he had not sent a special envoy to the French Republic aboard the *Nancy*, had on the other hand sent Mr. Jay to London to discuss a new treaty.

"Pacifist! Monarchist! Anglomaniac!" the Republicans were shouting.

"War-hawks! Jacobins! Francophiles!" the Federalists replied.

"We are no longer Americans," Roger Moore complained. "The deliberations of Congress resemble a debate between the British House of Commons and the French National Assembly. The next hawker who offers me a cockade, I don't care if it's white or tricolor, is going to get the thrashing of his life!"

And on June 8, 1795, Mr. Jay's ridiculous document, or his excellent treaty of amity and commerce with England—depending on whether you were a Republican or a Federalist—reached the Senate.

Colonel Burr, it was rumored, had moved to have it laid on the table but it was believed to have been ratified. Splendid. Terrible.

"We've been betrayed by that aristocrat of a Jaybird!" the Republican members of the Coffee House insisted. "Didn't he kiss the Queen's hand when he met her? Disgraceful!"

"What would you have had him do?" Jumel is said to have retorted once. "Give her a fraternal hug?"

And then some one stole the treaty from behind the closed doors of the Senate and published it in pamphlets. The Boston post riders passed through New York with it on the morning of July 2. By noon the entire town had read it. The streets were black with people, the Coffee House and Fraunces' were seething. The Clintons and the Livingstons and all their tribe were simply savage about it and nearly drove Roger Moore into apoplexy.

"Any damages for the Indian massacres stirred up by the British? No. Any clause preventing the impressment of American sailors? No. George Washington ought to be impeached. Crocodile!"

The excitement increased. Cato and Camillus and Brutus began writing to the gazettes. Peter Porcupine was at it on his side, shedding his stinging Federalist quills. Boston unanimously condemned the treaty. New York was delighted, and determined to hold a public meeting of its own. On July 17 the town was flooded with handbills summoning the people to Federal Hall at noon on the following day. Nothing else was talked of that Friday, from the Battery to Mariner's Tavern. Up at the Indian Queen the garden was packed with French sympathizers, flaunting their cockades and drinking tipsy toasts.

"A perpetual harvest to America but clipped wings, lame legs, the pip and an empty crop to all Jays!"

"Cockades! Tricolor cockades!"

And on the morning of July 18 when the streets were already boiling and humming the clerk of the Tontine Coffee House posted a notice on the bulletin board:

> ENTERED, THIS DAY, THE BRIG *Nancy*, FROM NANTES, VIA MARTINIQUE. FULL CARGO OF WINES AND FOUR PASSENGERS. CONSIGNED TO STEPHEN JUMEL, ESQ.

She dropped anchor off the Battery a little before noon and sent a boat ashore. Besides her complement of sailors the boat was heavily laden for it carried two gentlemen—one a soldierly looking person in his forties, the other a meek little white-haired man who perched gingerly on his thwart like a sparrow, and a servant with their portmanteaux—a great many portmanteaux. In the stern sat Madame Delacroix holding a cage with a large green parrot on one knee and a little boy on the other. A pale, delicate looking little fellow of ten, perhaps, who hardly smiled at her attempts to amuse him with the parrot or arouse his interest in the new sights around him.

One learns all this and much of what followed from the careful report of it made by the man Ducros. For Ducros had heard of the *Nancy's* arrival, and Ducros was strolling on the Battery with his hands in his pockets, taking the air.

"I flatter myself that I acted with energy and zeal," he wrote to his chief, "without in any way alarming my suspects."

The boat landed at the steps and the portmanteaux were put ashore. At once it became evident that the servant Giles would not be able to manage with all of them. And there did not appear to be a hackney coach or a porter to be had that morning on the Battery. Every one was hurrying toward Broad Street and Wall. The soldierly gentleman seemed extremely impatient.

"Is there no one to help carry the portmanteaux?" he exclaimed. He spoke English quite fluently. "We can't leave them here with all these crowds. You, sailor, can't you help us?"

The sailor was Ducros, lounging near

the group picking his teeth. Most certainly, Citizen, the sailor would help with the portmanteaux. Where were they to be taken? To Citizeness Delacroix's house on Prince Street? Excellent. Only a few steps. And the little Citizen was going there too? Perfect. A fine little Citizen and a magnificent parrot. It was to be hoped that he talked, the parrot? The parrot answered for himself.

"—— your eyes! —— your eyes! Blood and rum!" he squawked.

Everybody laughed. The little boy stared at Ducros without blinking. A hawker was passing with his basket.

"Cockades! Tricolor cockades!"

Ducros called to him.

"There," he remarked, fastening the badge on the child's hat. "Our little Citizen must show his colors."

The boy smiled at the pretty ribbon. The soldierly gentleman made as if to snatch it away and then changed his mind, and Ducros laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks. The parrot flapped his wings and screamed.

"Blood and rum! —— your eyes!"

They set out for Prince Street. And when the soldierly gentleman came out again from Madame Delacroix's to ask his way to Wall Street Ducros was still there to show him.

JUMEL was in his office a little after noon on that day waiting for the visitor who must come at any moment, watching the tumult outside from his window.

Little Mr. Hamilton looking redder than ever standing on a stoop in Broad Street trying to harangue the crowd in favor of the treaty, and being hooted at for his pains. Brockholst Livingston up on the balcony of the Hall interrupting every one, shouting himself blue in the face, reading from the *Oracle of the Day*.

" 'John Jay! The arch traitor! Seize him, drown him, hang him, burn him, flay him alive! Men of America, he betrayed you with a kiss! As soon as he set foot on the soil of England he kissed the Queen's hand!' Citizens of New York, there are twenty-eight reasons for rejecting this abominable treaty!"

"Hear, hear! To —— with Jay! To —— with Washington! To —— with the aristocrats! Hurrah for France and Jefferson!"

"Cockades! Tricolor cockades!"

And so on and so on, and worse and more of it. Another day of rum and uproar. Jumel closed the window. There was a knock at the door.

"Come in."

One knows exactly what manner of person Jumel saw standing in the open doorway from the description of the visitor written later on the same day by Abigail Moore. A fairly tall, erect figure, fashionably dressed in the foreign style—top boots, a high-waisted vest with flap pockets, silver buttons on the deep cuffs of the coat, a light traveling cloak with a cape thrown across the straight shoulders, the hair caught in a queue with a small black bow. A man in his forties, regular features, fine eyes and firmly set lips that still gave ample evidence of what in more youthful days must have been extraordinary good looks. He carried himself extremely gracefully, like a swordsman. He almost never smiled. The voice was pleasant, the foreign accent scarcely perceptible, but he spoke charily. A man of silences. The eyes were frequently away somewhere.

As for what passed between him and Jumel during those first moments, one has only the reflection of it in Roger Moore's journal. He introduced himself; his name was Jean Picard, he was the Mr. Picard of the cipher letters. They had hardly begun to talk when the door flew open and Roger Moore came bursting in. He was purple in the face with fury. He did not even notice the stranger in the room, but went and pounded his fist on Jumel's desk. Did he know what those infernal scoundrels out there on Broad Street had done?

"They have stoned Alexander Hamilton! Yes sir, Colonel Alexander Hamilton stoned by a New York rabble! I

never thought to live to see such a day as this in my native city!"

Roger Moore was fairly hopping with rage—he was still spluttering about it in his diary that night—and as he went stalking up and down the room he found himself suddenly face to face with the stranger who had risen from his chair and was gazing at him in considerable dismay.

"By Gad sir, who are you?" Roger Moore asked him, quite shaken out of his usual urbanity, but before Jumel could put in a word he seized the other by the arm and was shouting at him again in an entirely different tone of voice. "By Gad, what are you doing here in Heaven's name?"

"This is Mr. Jean Picard," Jumel tried to explain.

"Fiddledeedee!" Roger Moore laughed, his temper all vanished for the moment. "Don't Picard me! What are you up to, you rascal? I recognized you the minute I took pains to look at you."

"I also recognized you," the gentleman who called himself Picard smiled. "How are you, Roger?"

"I don't understand at all," Jumel complained, and the other turned to him.

"Permit me to make an apology," he said. "It seemed best for me to use an assumed name in our negotiations as a measure of general precaution. I now have the honor to inform you that I am—"

"I'll tell you who he is!" Roger Moore insisted on doing the honors himself. "Mr. Jumel, I have the pleasure of presenting to you my old friend, my old comrade at Yorktown, the Count Axel de Fersen."

Axel de Fersen in America in July, 1795. There it is, the famous name on the page of the diary written just as plainly as possible in Roger Moore's neat merchant's handwriting. Jumel seems to have stared with all his eyes.

"Not the one who arranged the attempted flight of the royal family from Paris to Varennes?" he asked finally.

"I am that unhappy man," de Fersen replied.

Jumel bowed to him respectfully.

"It is a very great honor to make your acquaintance in person, Monsieur le Comte," he told him, "after having admired you so profoundly by name."

Mr. de Fersen was gazing out of the window, with that far-away look in his eyes they were all to notice.

"Crowds!" he seemed to be speaking to himself. "I am always afraid of crowds. They do such terrible things sometimes without thinking."

Memory, presentiment? He was himself to perish in brutal fashion in his fifty-fifth year at the hands of a mob in revolt which trampled him to death, clawing at his face in a shower of clubs and paving stones.

"Whatever became of the Dauphin?" Jumel asked—just to make conversation, he told Roger Moore afterward. He could not bear to look at de Fersen's brooding countenance any longer.

"The Dauphin?" de Fersen exclaimed, drawn at once from his reverie. "The Son of France is dead. Why do you ask?"

"Dead!" the two others cried in the same breath. The news of the death of the child in the Temple prison in June had of course not yet reached America.

"Oh, I don't mean that imbecile child in the Temple," de Fersen told them. "That child isn't the Dauphin."

"Not the Dauphin!"

"No, of course not. The real Dauphin was smuggled out long ago and another boy substituted."

"But tell us, tell us!" they both insisted. After a hundred and thirty years one still feels the breathlessness of Roger Moore's account of that recital.

It had been quite simple, de Fersen pretended. It was in 1793, after the execution of the Queen. There had been an attempt which had failed the year before. The time Genêt had been stopped at the barriers of Paris and his coach searched because it was thought that he

had the Dauphin with him—perhaps they had heard of that? Well, there was no one in the coach except Genêt. The thing had been given up just in time. But the second attempt had succeeded. A boy had been taken in to the Temple in a big clothes-basket of laundry and the Dauphin had been taken out.

"No," he denied their assumption of his active participation. "I was not there at the moment of the escape. I should have been recognized in Paris and spoiled everything. I won't tell you who it was. News like that travels too easily and harm might come to them."

"But you had a hand in it I'll wager!" Roger Moore challenged him.

"I was at the barrier with a carriage," de Fersen admitted. "The child was delivered to me and I drove him away. It was like the night of Varennes."

He was looking down at his hand, at a ring on his finger. A wide circlet of dull gold holding a strange stone which they did not recognize.

"That is the ring the Queen gave me that night," he held out his hand suddenly. "When I came to the door of the coach to say good-by at the first relay. I could have saved them if they'd let me accompany them all the way. Those stupid delays would never have occurred. But Her Majesty wouldn't let me. She gave me this ring and sent me away. I only saw her once again before they killed her."

The man had stopped living. Roger Moore could see that. There were only two dates that he remembered, two dreadful anniversaries which he kept without cease. October 16, 1793, the day of Marie Antoinette's execution, and June 20, 1791, the night of the flight to Varennes, the failure of which had caused the other. Curiously enough, it was on a June 20 that he was to die, dragged from a coach.

"And now you say the real Dauphin is dead?" Jumel was trying to bring him back from the past.

"Yes. I took him to the royalist leaders in the Vendée—de la Motte, and de Colignac and de la Roche. But he was not strong enough to stand the hardships and the constant moving from place to place. They had to leave him in hiding with some peasants last year during a spell of desperate fighting and when they came back for him he was dead of pneumonia. More stupidity! The Son of France, poor little fellow."

"Gad, Axel," Roger Moore shook his head. "How do you know all these things?"

"Her Majesty honored me with her friendship," he reminded them, with a glance which showed all the mettle of the man. "I have a certain right."

They came back to their business. The cipher letters and the voyage of the *Nancy*. There was a refugee concerned, of course. A long standing enterprise, frequently postponed because of more important intervening matters and now finally consummated, thanks to their help.

"The individual in question," de Fersen informed them, "is a boy of ten whom we will call Francis Vincent. An English sounding name but it occurs also as a French name in Santo Domingo. An excellent combination. Actually, this boy comes of a very old noble Vendée family. As a result of the guillotine and the war he is now the only surviving member of the family. He is himself proscribed and has been in hiding or flying across the countryside for the last three years."

"Just like the little Dauphin!" Roger Moore remarked.

"Yes, just like the little Dauphin, only less care was taken with him and his hardships were greater. Still, he survived."

"You were interested in this boy?" Jumel inquired.

"I had known his parents in the old days at Versailles," de Fersen explained. "One of his uncles helped us during the flight to Varennes. I was determined to save this child. His old world is dead; there is nothing left for him in France. Let him grow up here in your America,

in a new world where he may be more fortunate."

With him on the *Nancy* de Fersen had brought a tutor for the boy, a harmless old soul called Mercier, and a servant, Giles. There was some money. It was de Fersen's desire to purchase a suitable residence for the boy, invest his little fortune to the best advantage and leave him in America under the care of Mr. Mercier and Giles. Perhaps Moore and Jumel would act as guardians, or Moore alone if Jumel was not in a position to accept such a responsibility?

"What do you say, Roger, will you act as guardian for my little refugee?"

It was the sort of request which Roger Moore was the least likely to refuse. Yes, he would act as guardian. They would do well to invest the money in sound scrip —some of the canal companies or real estate in the neighborhood of the Collect Pond, the city was bound to spread in that direction. As for a residence, Roger Moore knew just the place. A little estate in Greenwich called Brook Field, not far from Moore Mansion and Colonel Burr's Richmond Hill, which was going begging. A good neighborhood and the healthiest spot on the island, and only two miles from town. So it was decided. In the meantime they must all come out to Moore Mansion and stay there. Roger Moore would not hear of any other arrangement.

"We will go to Prince Street at once," he announced, "pack you all into a hackney coach and take you bag and baggage to Greenwich."

"I warn you, Roger, there is a large green parrot!" de Fersen smiled.

"Bring him along! Abigail will be delighted to welcome you, parrot and all."

They stood up and shook hands on it.

"I will accompany you as far as Prince Street," Jumel suggested. "I should like to see the boy."

"Yes, and the beautiful Betsy Delacroix!" Roger Moore chuckled. "Is she so beautiful, Axel?"

"She attracts attention," de Fersen prudently decided.

CHAPTER IV

THE BOY IN GREEN

DUCROS had waited as patiently as possible in the street, lending his stentorian support to the public tumult, and when Jumel and his two companions came out he followed them. They were held up for a while by a noisy procession consisting of sailors and veterans of the war who were industriously carrying a large and peculiarly atrocious caricature of Mr. Jay around town, presumably for the purpose of burning it at some tavern door. Jumel and the soldierly looking gentleman had their hands full preventing Roger Moore from rushing out into the middle of the street and making a spectacle of himself.

"Those infernal scoundrels!" he chattered. "Just let me at them—how dare they insult Mr. Jay that way!"

"A crowd like that always has to carry something on a pole," Ducros' gentleman of the portmanteaux remarked.

It seemed to Ducros that they were making a great fuss about nothing. He had seen worse things than that carried around the streets of Paris on the night of the massacre in the prisons. They arrived at the house on Prince Street, and once again he had to content himself with hanging around outside.

The others went in and were immediately greeted by a most improper uproar.

"—— your eyes! —— your eyes! —— your eyes!" some one was shouting.

"It's the parrot," de Fersen frowned. "He has no manners, that parrot. And the embarrassing thing is that the boy knows hardly any English but what he does know he seems to have learned principally from the parrot!"

And then a curtain parted and the boy was there staring at them. Roger Moore saw a slender little fellow in a green cassimere coat and trousers, a white dimity waistcoat and a shirt with a broad frilled collar open at the throat. His curly flaxen hair fell to his shoulders. In his hand he held an apple with one bite gone from it, and he looked at them with

wide blue eyes. He was pale and thin and he had that startled expression which comes to children who at some time have been terribly frightened. But when he stirred ever so slightly it was with astonishing grace, and when at last he smiled it was as if a ray of light had touched his countenance. He was still wearing Ducros' tricolor cockade pinned to his coat and when de Fersen made a gesture to remove it he flew into a little temper, shaking his curls and stamping his foot.

"*Non, non, non!*" he cried. "*Ne touchez pas ma cocarde, Monsieur Picard!*"

De Fersen let him go and he came and planted himself in front of the other two with another bite gone from the apple.

"Well, little monkey?" Roger Moore pinched his cheek and the boy sprang away.

"He is not accustomed to being touched that way," de Fersen murmured. "Come, Francis, behave yourself—*dis bonjour poliment.*"

But Francis was not in the mood for social amenities.

"To —— with Jay!" he exclaimed suddenly—"widjay" he pronounced it—and went scampering out of the room, brandishing his apple.

Roger Moore and Jumel simply shook with laughter.

"He heard that in the street," de Fersen assured them. "He imitates everything. He is a perfect little —— when he wants to be. You must excuse him, all the excitement of arrival and the crowds."

"Excuse him!" Roger Moore was still laughing. "I've a great mind to adopt him. The little cuss!"

It was at that instant, he recorded later, that Jumel nudged him, and for a moment Roger Moore forgot the boy entirely since he was too busy looking at the radiant creature who had just stepped into the room—Betsy Delacroix.

"Such hair, such eyes, such features, such a shape, lord!" he wrote in his diary.

The face of a very bad angel, Jumel told him afterward. But a magnificent beauty, and she was perfectly charming with the boy. Roger Moore would have done well at the time, perhaps, to have told Jumel what he knew about the lady. Little enough, but that was sufficient—that she had been born in Providence some twenty years before, the daughter of a sailor father and a disreputable mother; that for eighteen years she had led an utterly vagrant existence interrupted by terms in the workhouse; and that for the last two years—prior to her appearance in New York and her marriage to Captain Delacroix—her constant associate in Providence had been that Mistress Freelove Ballou, the wife of Reuben Ballou who kept the canal drivers' wine shop on the towpath. And there were other things which Roger Moore did not know.

But Jumel knew nothing at all and he gazed at length and significantly with his sparkling French eye upon the ship captain's wife. And the big strapping Jumel with his deep laugh was not a person that one forgot. They exchanged very few words during the bustle of departure for Greenwich, but it was written that Jumel was to return to the house on Prince Street when the captain was away. And it was not to be so long in any case before Betsy was separated from her husband and acting on one of the garden stages, calling herself Eliza Brown.

Ducros did not need to be told where they were going when he saw Roger Moore and his party installing themselves in a hackney coach in front of Citizeness Delacroix's—to Moore Mansion evidently. He did not wait to see them start, but made his way rapidly up the Bowery Lane to the Bull's Head tavern which Richard Varian had leased from the butcher Henry Astor. At the tavern he ordered a horse from the Boston and Albany stage stable, treated himself to a tankard of ale and set out for Greenwich as soon as the coach had trundled by, passing it before it turned into Monument Lane.

"I had my little plan," he reported. "Before going to Philadelphia it was my wish to hear them talk if possible, the fat Moore and his visitor."

The coach went rolling out into the country up the Bowery and Monument Lanes into the Richmond Hill woods to the gates of Moore Mansion.

They disembarked before the portico, whereupon Abigail Moore, who had come out to see what all this commotion might signify, experienced the unusual sensation of being embraced most heartily on both cheeks by a total stranger of the male sex. No mean experience. At least she took him for a total stranger until she had another look at him, smiling down at her, and then she too smiled broadly. And when she smiled they say that she was almost good looking in spite of the nose.

"My eye and Betty Martin!" she cried. "What a turn you gave me. You never did that to me before, Axel de Fersen!"

"I know," he replied. "And for years I have been longing to repair that error, Abigail."

"Tut, tut," she objected. "You could have done it at Annapolis if it had occurred to you."

"Oh, Annapolis!" he smiled. "Do you remember? Do you remember Rochambeau's dinner, and the ball at the State House, and de Lauzun trying to dance pettycoatee? I have not laughed like that for years."

"Yes, I remember," she agreed. There had, perhaps, never been anything else in her life quite like it to remember. "Have you ever married?" she asked him suddenly.

"No," he told her. "They tried to marry me off to Necker's daughter but I thought she would prefer to be Madame de Staël."

"Oh, you were like that at Annapolis already," she shook her head at him. "I'm sorry, Axel. I've admired you enormously for all the things you've done. You've known very difficult days, but if I were a man I think I should envy you. I'm glad you've come back to us."

"I like what you have just said, Abigail," he assured her.

And while in front of the portico a broken thread was being joined together again, out on the lawn a new skein was being spun. They turned and watched the children. It was the parrot which first seems to have attracted Polly and brought her skipping across the grass to view this wonder, but the strange little boy was evidently a more immediate concern—something to be inspected with suspicion.

"Hello!" she ventured.

The boy gazed at her silently.

"He is not at all accustomed to children," de Fersen warned them. "He has not played for so long."

"Leave him alone, Axel," Roger Moore insisted. "It's time he began. Polly won't stand on ceremony."

She was shaking her black curls impatiently.

"Aren't you funny?" she remarked. "Why don't you say something? I guess you haven't any manners—you're only a boy."

"Tut, tut!" Abigail Moore started forward but de Fersen put out his hand.

The boy continued to gaze silently at Polly. Polly stuck out her tongue at him. De Fersen's hand tightened on Abigail's arm. Polly had thought of something else.

"Hector Protector was dressed all in green,
Hector Protector was sent to the Queen.
The Queen did not like him, no more did the King,
So Hector Protector was sent back again!"

Polly chanted the rhyme with great unction, hopping up and down on one foot.

But the boy had at last formed his opinion of these unfriendly manifestations. He suddenly stuck out his own tongue at Polly and addressed her in only too clearly distinct English.

"—— your eyes!" he observed—and there was confusion in front of the portico.

ROGER MOORE and de Fersen sat in the library of Moore Mansion that evening after supper and talked for a long time. One has Roger Moore's account of that conversation and one also has Ducros', for it was warm in the library on that close July evening and the long French windows were all opened wide so that Ducros, flattened up against the

wall in the shadows outside, had no difficulty hearing what was said. It entertained him vastly.

They were talking about the boy.

"Let him grow up an American," the visitor was insisting. "His day—the day of families such as his was—is done in France. Oh, I know that the royalist families of the Vendée will go on trying to reestablish their old régime until every last one of them is killed. People like the Duc de Colignac and the Duc de Savenay. But their cause is hopeless."

"You really think so?"

"I am convinced of it. I know those Vendée men. They don't understand the meaning of the word cooperation. They forget there must be discipline and obedience and remember only that they are dukes. You know those French republicans. With all their liberty and equality, they do obey. Their armies have done wonders—just a ragtag and bobtail against the trained troops of Prussia and Austria!"

Ducros beamed with republican satisfaction. The barefoot armies of the Republic with the drummer boys out in front!

"There is just one thing," de Fersen was saying. "I want Francis to grow up here in these new surroundings and forget the past. He will fast enough. He's forgotten a great deal already. But I want you to do something for me when he comes of age."

"Certainly," Roger Moore agreed. "What is it?"

Mr. de Fersen reached in his side pocket and pulled out a package of papers securely tied and fastened with heavy red seals. Ducros was staring with all his eyes.

"Roger," de Fersen told Moore, "this package contains the proofs of Francis Vincent's real identity. There are certain family papers and heirlooms and a statement signed by myself naming this boy as the lawful recipient of these documents. He will have to take my word for it, of course. I am going back to Europe immediately and I may never return to America, and I think it only fair that when he comes of age he should be informed of his birth and ancestry."

"Certainly."

"After that he can make such use of the information as he may see fit. I will ask you therefore to keep this package, and in 1806—I have written the date on the package with his name and a reference to the contents—cause it to be placed in his hands."

"I see. Very well."

Ducros' report of these proceedings stops abruptly at that point. There was more to be overheard and the final disposition of the package to be if possible observed, but Ducros had to go. Some one was approaching, the night grounds keeper with his dogs. Ducros could hear them coming along the side of the house.

"I had heard so much," he wrote, "that I esteemed it unwise to risk capture for the sake of hearing more. I therefore departed."

He turned aside from the window, made his way cautiously into the shrubbery, and ran through the woods to where his horse was waiting. Not long afterward he was cantering down the Greenwich shore road bound for Bussing's wharf and the ferry to Paulus Hook and Philadelphia.

Roger Moore sat at the table, turning the package over and over in his hands looking at the heavy red seals. There was something about it, he admitted afterward, about the whole business which alarmed him suddenly. For what manner of secret was he becoming trustee? He put the package down and leaned forward in his chair.

"Axel," he asked him, "I've known you a long time, you don't have to tell me if you don't want to. Before I accept this package—who *is* this boy?"

Roger Moore did not record the answer anywhere among his papers. One must preserve the chronology of these events, as revealed by those who witnessed them. What happened that night in the library of Moore Mansion was this: There was a long silence while de Fersen

sat motionless staring out of the window. Then he took a piece of paper, wrote a sentence on it with Moore's quill pen, and pushed it toward him across the table. Roger Moore read what was written. He does not state what was on the paper, whether it startled or further alarmed him.

"Axel! Axel!" he exclaimed. "What are you up to?"

"Oh, I know what you're thinking," de Fersen replied. "You think I hadn't any right to spirit this child away, that I should have left him there in the Vendée to fulfill his destiny and carry on the tradition of his family."

"I am not reproaching you, Axel," Roger Moore assured him. "Don't think that. You know what you're doing better than I do."

"Yes, Roger, I know exactly what I am doing," de Fersen insisted. "I have seen the terror which has stalked through France for the past three years; I have seen those forests of the Vendée in the black winters of Brittany; I have seen the existence led by those unfortunate people, hunted like wolves, trapped like rats, no rest, no peace, no security, no hope. It is from such things that I have taken this child. From hunger and cold, from cheerless days and terrified nights. It is not right that a child should be exposed to such things, I don't care who he is."

There was nothing to be said.

"As for the people I have deceived," he went on, "what does it matter? They think he is dead. What was this child to them? The last representative of a great family, a little boy to be hustled about from one hiding place to another, a name to be used in the furtherance of their own schemes. I sacrificed the name and saved the boy. Destiny, family tradition —empty words, Roger, in the black woods of the Vendée. Mr. de la Roche has found a refuge in Philadelphia from it all and so has de la Motte. Well, this child is entitled to a little happiness too, a little laughter and play, a little quiet sleep in the night time after the years that have passed. There—that is all I have to say. What are you going to do?"

Roger Moore said nothing at all. He took the paper on which de Fersen had written and burned it in the candle. Then he went quietly to the mantelpiece with the package in his hand and touched a spring in the wall. He did not say where in his diary—simply "the spring in the wall." He looked around once to see that de Fersen was watching and slipped the package into the opening presented by the swinging panel before him. Then he touched the spring again and the panel closed with a tiny click

"There, Axel," he spoke at last. "You can go your way in peace."

"Roger! Old friend!" de Fersen came to him with hands outstretched. "In most of the things which I have undertaken in my life I have failed. Except this once, thanks to you. If I could tell you how grateful I am!"

They went to bed. In a few days Mr. de Fersen took passage home to Europe; and one does not see him again.

IN THE middle of the second night Ducros was at Philadelphia pounding on the front door of the French Minister's house. Ducros had not slept at all, he was almost rigid from his hours in the saddle, he was in an extremely bad humor. The result is one or two extremely entertaining pages in the French police archives, for the man had a gift of sarcastic description, a memory for ludicrous details, and ill temper always sharpened his tongue of which his pen was the faithful echo.

"Citizen Ducros to see Citizen Fauchet at once," he explained to the servants who came finally to investigate the hullabaloo he was making at the door.

"Citizen Fauchet has returned to France," they told him. "He has been replaced by Citizen Adet."

"Very well," Ducros persisted. "I don't care what his name is. I must see the Citizen Minister."

"But the Citizen Minister has gone to bed," they objected.

"Then get him out of bed, imbeciles!"

Sapristi! Get the Citizen Minister out of bed at this hour! That was a good one. Who did the citizen think he was, a representative of the people? And that was a good one too. Loud laughter.

"Thunder of God!" Ducros roared at them. "Don't you understand? It is I, Ducros, the representative of the Committee of Public Safety. Do I have to show you my papers, you bunch of camels? Take me to the Citizen Minister's room at once before I exterminate you!"

Oh well, in that case—Committee of Public Safety—that made a difference. Why hadn't the citizen said so before? This way. They led him up-stairs and pointed out the door of Citizen Adet's room. The citizen could knock if he wanted to. The citizen did knock, a terrific crack on the door with the handle of his riding crop, and without waiting for an answer snatched a candle from one of the servants and went in. The Citizen Minister was lying in bed, blinking at the light, with his cotton night-cap pulled down over one ear.

"In the name of the French Republic I protest against this outrage!" he began as soon as he caught sight of Ducros. "A minister plenipotentiary may not be murdered in his bed—"

"Very interesting," Ducros remarked. "Note shall be taken of the fact. In the meantime, are you the Citizen Minister?"

"I am. And I protest—" he protested for a long time. Ducros by candle light can not have been a reassuring sight from all accounts. He set the candle down on the bureau and went to the side of the bed.

"Citizen Minister," he announced, "a thousand pardons for disturbing your rest, but I am a secret agent of the Committee of Public Safety and I have a report to make which will gladden your ears. The Dauphin is in New York."

Citizen Adet jumped up in bed "as if he had been bitten by a bedbug."

"The Dauphin!" he cried. "You mean the son of the late Louis Capet?"

"The very same, Citizen Minister. The brat is in New York. I have seen him."

"You must be crazy," the other insisted. "The child is in the Temple prison in Paris."

"Not at all," Ducros informed him. "The child is not in the Temple prison in Paris for the good reason that he is at this very moment at the home of Citizen Moore at Greenwich near New York. I myself carried their portmanteaux when they landed at the Battery, I myself was at Greenwich and listened while they talked. I have been extremely active lately—" and he went on to tell all he knew about the *Nancy* and the boy in green and the package.

"Are you sure?" Citizen Adet kept saying, clutching at the collar of his night-shirt. "Are you sure?"

"Certainly I am sure," Ducros maintained. "What a question! Didn't I serve as a sentry once at the Temple for six months and didn't I see the brat there every day with that fat Louis and his Austrian queen? If I am sure! The child is in New York I tell you."

"Name of a name!" Citizen Adet finally seemed convinced. He pulled the bedclothes up around his chin as though to protect himself from this dilemma. "Now there will be all the five hundred thousand devils to pay! What are we going to do?"

"That is for the Citizen Minister to decide," Ducros advised him. "It is not for me to say. Steps must be taken. Are there any instructions?"

"Instructions, instructions—I can not decide anything in the middle of the night!" the Citizen Minister complained crossly. "I shall have to communicate with France. Perhaps I shall make representations to the Department of State."

"Puh!" Ducros expressed his disgust. "Citizen Genêt tried that. It is a windmill in a storm, the American Department of State. Is there nothing better than that to do?"

"Yes, watch that nest of royalist refugees right here in Philadelphia and of

course keep the child under observation night and day. After all he could not make himself King of France in America!"

Ducros took the candle and went to the door.

"Who knows?" he observed. "Anything is possible in America. It is a very extraordinary country in which the people do nothing but shout. Citizen Genêt found that out."

But the Citizen Minister was evidently not disposed to discuss the point. He had in fact disappeared entirely under the bedclothes. Ducros left the room and went to look for a place to sleep.

"He is no miracle of energy, this Citizen Minister," he wrote afterward. "Genêt would have done the wrong thing but at least he would have found a way before breakfast to annoy the American Government. I shall have to take charge of this affair and get the boy to France."

CHAPTER V

GENTLEMEN IN MASKS

"THE Dauphin is in New York."

The boy in green, Francis Vincent —de Fersen's little refugee son of a noble Vendée family—was Charles Louis, Dauphin of France, in fact since the death of his father Louis XVII, King of France. The gentleman of St. John's Park?

There it is, in so many words, in Ducros' report to Paris:

> *"Greetings and fraternity. I have to say to you an extraordinary thing. Charles Louis Capet, hitherto Dauphin, arrived two days ago at New York, in the company of various individuals whom I shall describe below. It was not for nothing that I warned you in September regarding the brig* Nancy, *but of course my dispatches did not reach you soon enough to allow you to detain her. Permit me to remark that in my time the Temple prison was not open to all the winds of Heaven. It was not a church that one could walk in and out of it so easily—"*

The Dauphin was in New York. Then de Fersen had deliberately deceived Jumel, and presumably Roger Moore, concerning the boy's identity? As for Roger Moore, he was shown a piece of paper which he destroyed. On it de Fersen had written a name. Roger Moore never divulged it. He was never to have cause to doubt its authenticity, but then he was not to live to see the end of the adventure. What he believed during his lifetime concerning the boy is not revealed in any of his writings. What other persons believed will shortly become manifest. What de Fersen himself believed was concealed in that famous package. Only two persons in America were ever to see its contents, that is to say the written testimony which it submitted.

What they saw was never made public. The final certainty regarding the Dauphin was provided in a quite different manner. For the Dauphin was in America. There is now no shadow of doubt.

With certain necessary exceptions, it is not intended in these pages to detail the progress of Francis Vincent's boyhood years. The record of them is available in Abigail Moore's journal. His ailments and physickings, his annual subjections to rhubarb and senna. His periodic journeys to town, to be fitted with tammies, and ribdelures, and velverets. His occasional outings—to the Belvidere Club to enjoy the view over Long Island from the Captain's Walk, to Brannan's for ices and to the Mount Vernon Garden to ride on the flying horses, to the Museum to see the mammoth's tooth and the wampum belts, or to the itinerant show to look at the automatons and the "catoptric spy-glasses" and the electric "thunder houses." His little struggles with Mr. Cheever's "Accidence" and Mr. Webster's "American Institute." One knows that he learned rapidly, and would have forgotten all his French except for Mr. Mercier, and that at all available intervening moments he climbed trees and fell in the Minetta Brook and went horseback riding with Polly Moore.

One knows also that at the age of twelve he was tremendously in love with the plump rosy little Theodosia Burr, his neighbor of Richmond Hill, a young lady of fourteen who spoke Greek and Latin, played on the harpsichord and managed her father's hospitable household as if she had been a matron of mature experience. She managed Richmond Hill and in her leisure she managed Brook Field, descending with her escort of dogs on the helpless Mr. Mercier with all manner of domestic suggestions concerning the proper care of linen, the efficient marshaling of leather fire-buckets, the planting of flower-beds and the correct method of treating white coach-horses' coats with paste of whiting in order to insure the highest effect of glossy finish.

"She gives me no rest, that child," Mr. Mercier complained already in 1795 to Abigail Moore. "She insists that for the grand occasions we must have the hoofs of our horses blacked and polished, and that we must also scour their teeth. She has also found another groom for us."

Abigail Moore reassured him. Theodosia was quite right, if the Brook Field equipage was to hold its own with the coaches of the quality. Francis must have "muslin horses." As for the groom, he must not be paid more than ten dollars a month. One is not surprized to discover that the new groom's name was Ducros.

Francis grew up and broadened and lengthened out, with the good air of Greenwich in his cheeks and a new look in his eyes which came of the quiet in the night time which Mr. de Fersen had wished for him. Roger Moore watched him and was satisfied.

> *Hector Protector grows strong and well,* he wrote. *I do not repent of my decision. Axel was right to take him away and bring him here. He will be very good looking when he is older.*

The curls were gone and the broad frilled collar and the delicate air of the boy in green had vanished in the saucy little Yankee who ruled Brook Field. But there remained always a gracefulness of gesture, an elegance of manner, a certain dignity of bearing, an instinctive nobility in the tilt of the chin and the level glance of the wide blue eyes, which mantled him in the folds of an unmistakable heritage. Roger Moore, who had known those young French noblemen of Rochambeau's and Lafayette's staffs, could see the indications of race and breeding asserting themselves in Francis.

"That boy will always attract attention," he told Jumel. But he did not suspect with what persistence and from what quarters.

At all events, at Richmond Hill one afternoon in August of 1797, a certain gentleman paused in the act of taking a pinch of snuff and stared very hard through the drawing-room window at Master Francis Vincent who was cavorting out on the lawn under the cedars, pretending that he was a volunteer fire company, ignoring the advances of the little d'Aurelle girl who had been sent out by Abigail Moore to play with him. For she had finally escaped from Santo Domingo, the little d'Aurelle girl, and Jumel had brought her to the mansion that afternoon with Madame de Lassy who was about to sail for Jamaica to join the little girl's aunt. So these Santo Domingans found one another again sometimes after long months.

He told his friends about it afterward; the gentleman of the snuff-box, and Abigail Moore also witnessed the scene. There was a great gathering at the mansion that afternoon. Major-domo Alexis was busy constantly in front of the lofty Ionic portico welcoming the coaches that rolled up the drive. In the drawing-room Theodosia was discoursing on the works of Mr. Jeremy Bentham to a large circle of ladies and gentlemen from Greenwich and from the city and from Philadelphia. Very elegant gentlemen, the latter, who spoke English with a strong French accent, flourishing enameled snuff boxes and gilded lorgnons on long black ribbons. They all smelled rather strongly,

too, of camphor and aloes and Vinegar of the Four Thieves for there was the yellow fever again that summer in New York and Philadelphia.

For myself, Abigail wrote, *I prefer Daffy's Elixir and Haarlem Oil, and a slice of garlic in one's shoes. Otherwise the stench at public gatherings is quite disconcerting.*

And of all those elegant gentlemen who bowed so courteously to one another and carried their hats always under their arms, there was none more elegant and courtly, in Abigail Moore's opinion, than that gentleman by the window—the Marquis de la Motte—in his plain black clothes and frilled linen. Extremely plain black clothes, and positively shiny at the elbows, Abigail noted, but the linen was spotless and you did not care about the clothes when once you had looked at Mr. de la Motte's bright eyes behind their long gray lashes and heard his deep, quiet voice "ringing like a chime of bells." Theodosia was doing her best to entertain him but Mr. de la Motte was quite obviously not listening to her at all, since he was staring out of the window, with the snuff-box unused in his hand.

"Tell me, I pray," he asked finally. "Who is that boy out there on the lawn?"

Theodosia told him, and Colonel Burr came in just then to present Mr. Robert Fulton to Madame de Lassy, and when Abigail Moore thought of Mr. de la Motte again he had left the circle. Abigail did not know that Mr. de la Motte was one of the Vendée generals, nor did she relate the incident to Roger Moore. At least there is no reference to it in his diary. Perhaps because it was that afternoon that the groom Ducros ran away. He had come to Richmond Hill with the Brook Field coach, and when it was time for Francis to go home there was no groom. The episode loomed large in Abigail's orderly mind, more so than Mr. de la Motte's interest in Francis.

But Ducros did not run away until he had heard what Mr. de la Motte had to say to Francis when he went out on the lawn to talk to him. Ducros was a sharp listener, whether through open windows or lounging at the edge of shrubberies, and his report of the conversation is not any less accurate than Mr. de la Motte's account given later in the presence of Mr. de Vendome.

"They tell me you are French?" he asked Francis.

"Yes, sir, born in France." But he was American now, the boy assured him.

"So many of us these days have become American, at least for the time being," de la Motte smiled. "Permit me to present myself—I am the Marquis de la Motte."

"How do you do," Francis held out his hand. "My name is Francis Vincent."

Mr. de la Motte shook hands with a very profound bow which did not escape Ducros.

"I was convinced then," he wrote, "that the long one had recognized the Dauphin."

Mr. de la Motte began to ask a great many questions.

"Tell me," he inquired, "is Francis your only Christian name?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you never been called anything else? When you were in France—try and think—did no one ever call you by a different name? The people you saw every day, what did they call you?"

"They just called me *Monsieur.*"

"I see. And how old are you?"

"I'm twelve years old since March."

"Indeed. Since March?"

"March twenty-seventh."

Twelve years old. That would make it March 27, 1785. The date of the Dauphin's birth.

"That is splendid," Mr. de la Motte smiled again. And he looked at Francis for the longest time, stroking his chin. "Where," he asked suddenly, "where are your papa and mamma?"

"They went away a long time ago," Francis replied. "When we were in the house with the big tower, before the gentleman came and took me into the woods."

"The house with the big tower?" Mr. de la Motte repeated. "Tell me all about that."

So Francis told him all that he remembered—about a big house with a tall tower, although he did not know for sure now where it was, and about a time when he had been asleep, and when he woke up he was in a carriage driven by a gentleman. There had been many soldiers at the house. He had not always lived in this house. There had been another place before, a place with a garden. Yes, always many soldiers and people.

"Before all these things happened," Mr. de la Motte wanted to know, "did you ever take a long, long journey in a carriage? At night, with your parents?"

Francis could not answer. He would only have been six at the time of the flight to Varennes, and there had probably been so many carriage journeys since then.

"Had you any brothers or sisters?" Mr. de la Motte continued his inquisition.

Francis did not think so. He was getting a little fidgety with all these questions. He seemed to remember best about the woods where they had taken him, and the owls calling outside the window.

"Was it like this?" Mr. de la Motte showed him. "*Hoo-hoo-hoo!*" The rallying cry of the Vendée insurrection.

Yes, it was exactly like that. And there were gentlemen in the woods dressed all in white, and soldiers with red hearts and crosses on their coats. It made Ducros laugh when he stopped to think that de la Motte himself had been one of those white-clad gentlemen the boy was describing.

"And were you with the soldiers always?" the Marquis had thought of something else.

"No sir. They all went away, and they took me to a little house in the woods until the gentleman came for me to bring me to America. They kept me in bed and gave me nasty medicine to drink."

"And did you have trouble remembering things after that?"

"I don't know—I remembered what I have told you, sir."

"I see. Tell me, who was the gentleman who brought you to America?"

"He said he was Mr. Picard but my Aunt Abigail Moore she called him Mr. de Fersen."

"Bless my soul!" Mr. de la Motte exclaimed. "Mr. de Fersen! Everything explains itself."

He seemed very much amused and intensely provoked at the same time. It was a revelation, too, to Ducros.

"So it was that sacred aristocrat from Sweden," he grumbled. "The Queen's darling. Puh!"

Mr. de la Motte was bowing again.

"I must go now," he said to Francis. "But I hope to return soon and have the pleasure of seeing you again."

"Yes sir. And will you teach me to give the owl's cry?"

"Oh, my child! Yes, if you like, I will teach you to give the owl's cry some day. *Au revoir, Monsieur.*"

The long de la Motte was off to the house, calling to his grooms.

"We leave for Philadelphia at once," he ordered.

It was then that Ducros ran away.

> *I had no great desire,* he wrote, *to go to Philadelphia where they are having the yellow plague. The Government has been removed, and the population is encamped in tents along the banks of the Schuylkill. The town is a pest-house. But since Citizen Adet has been recalled and there is no Minister of the Republic in this country, I considered it my duty to watch the royalist nest and learn if possible what they proposed to do with their discovery.*

He went first to borrow a gig from his friend Delacroix who, now that his Betsy had left him, had abandoned the sea and was preparing to open the Vauxhall Garden on Bayard's Mount. There Ducros made a discovery of his own. He was mad, Delacroix told him. People were dying like flies in Philadelphia. Whole

districts were deserted, there were yellow flags on almost all the houses and barricades across most of the streets, and if you so much as looked across one they fined you three hundred dollars.

"How so?" Ducros inquired.

"Certainly," Delacroix assured him. "They have inspectors now and they have the right to go into any house and search for fever suspects. They can order any one they please removed to the pest-house and if they catch you even handing food to some one in an infected house they fine you."

"That is very interesting," Ducros observed.

"It is very stupid," Delacroix retorted. "Because any one can pass himself off for an inspector and inform falsely against some one he has a grudge against. And they have arranged it so that the informer gets half the fine. I say it is very stupid."

"But still it is very interesting," Ducros insisted.

Why not clap all these royalists in the pest-house? Before they had an opportunity to make any plans whatever? Some of them would probably die there—Ducros had heard tales of the pest-house—and in any case time would be gained.

"It seems a luminous idea," Ducros reported from Princeton. "I gave it much thought while I was following behind de la Motte to Philadelphia. *Sapristi*, I said to myself, the aristocrats to the pest-house! Why had no one thought of that before?"

ON THE evening of his arrival in Philadelphia Mr. de la Motte and three other gentlemen wearing white cockades on their hats sat in the up-stairs back room of an obscure little house on Pieman's Lane near the river. From Mr. de Vendome one learns that they were all reeking of garlic, that a big bowl of camphor stood on the table in front of them adding its pungent aroma to the atmosphere of the carefully unventilated room, and that from time to time they inhaled large pinches of snuff. All four of them were bundled up in mufflers soaked with Godfrey's Cordial which covered their mouths and chins, and, as a final safeguard against the poisonous air, each wore a thick black mask over his face, under which the perspiration and the tears caused by smarting eyes ran in rivulets down his cheeks.

To Ducros, crouched at the keyhole of the door, these precautions seemed excellent. He was himself drenched from head to foot with balm of aloes, he was chewing an enormous quid of tobacco and he had a bag of camphor hung around his neck. The compounded stench from within the room met his nostrils with a welcome promise of security. But he wished that the four gentlemen had not been wearing masks. He could hear what they were saying perfectly well but it was impossible to be sure of their voices and he could not see their faces.

One was the long de la Motte, of course—Ducros had followed him to the house from Cameron's Tavern—but who were the other three who had come one by one quickly down the middle of the street to rap once and then three times at the door while he watched in the shadows?

"Gentlemen," Mr. de la Motte was saying, "I have sent for you this evening to give you a piece of news of the utmost importance."

"It must be," one of them grunted, "to bring us from our homes at a time like this."

"Judge for yourself, Monsieur le Duc," Mr. de la Motte told him. "Gentlemen, I have the honor to inform you that three days ago I saw and spoke for some time with Monsieur the Dauphin."

Instinctively all three of them pushed their chairs back from the table, away from the speaker.

"Hallucinations!" the Duke cried. "De la Motte has got the fever!"

"Not at all," the Marquis insisted. "His Majesty is at present at Greenwich near New York. He has been in America for the past two years. I saw him at Colonel Burr's house at Richmond Hill."

"My good de la Motte," the Duke exclaimed, "you must be crazy. The

Dauphin died in 1794; Mr. de Fersen himself told us."

"Mr. de Fersen has deceived us all very cleverly," Mr. de la Motte assured them. "The Dauphin did not die in 1794, since I tell you that I have seen him and it was Mr. de Fersen who brought him to America."

"What you say is fantastic, but you had better tell us everything from the beginning," the Duke suggested.

Mr. de la Motte leaned forward, and for a time they forgot their snuff while he related to them all the details of his interview with the boy on the lawn.

"Of course the date means nothing," the Duke objected. "One is not to suppose that the Dauphin was the only child born in France on March 27, 1785!"

"Oh, I know," Mr. de la Motte maintained, "the date alone is nothing, but taken in connection with all the other facts, and Mr. de Fersen's presence in the affair—and besides, I recognized him! I recognized him the moment I laid my eyes on him. He has changed, of course—he is bigger and looks better and they have cut off his curls, but the eyes, the hair, the way he holds himself, everything about him—if Francis Vincent is not Charles Louis of France then I am not the Marquis de la Motte."

"You are sure, Marquis?"

"Monsieur le Duc, I am positive."

They sat silent for a while, Mr. de Vendome records, eying one another behind their masks, appraising this turn of chance, guarding the thoughts which passed through their minds. Joy at this return to life of the lost Son of France. Doubt and misgiving. Perhaps a sudden sadness at the certainty of a struggle to be renewed, a burden to be shouldered once more, all the old dead hopes revived, the old rallying cries to be sounded again throughout a wasted and weary but endlessly faithful countryside.

"The irrevocable necessity of it," Mr. de Vendome wrote, "and the dread of its futility which must never be acknowledged."

And a boy to be taken back to France, from the brief security of these sheltered Greenwich years, back into the black woods of the Vendée to seek his fate along the hazardous roads of destiny. The pity of it, it seemed to Mr. de Vendome, for the boy who was so young and for some of them who were growing old.

For himself, Mr. de Vendome was too youthful—in his twenties—to appreciate the lost cause. He had scarcely known the past. There was a whole new future before him. The King of France—yes, that was very sacred, a tradition to serve and to die for. One could not refuse, but it was a duty, not a desire. It was those old ones who made a cult of it, who must sacrifice entire lives to it, force upon this child an issue which might so easily, after all, have been spared him. Those old ones for whom there was no longer any future unless it revived that past which now alone sustained them.

"Those desperately loyal old ones who will never know when a thing is finished!"

From the very first, while he accepted the obligation which it inevitably placed upon him, Raoul de Vendome wished that the boy had not been found. For the boy's sake, to begin with.

"Well, gentlemen," Mr. de la Motte remarked finally. "What had we better do?"

"There is nothing we can do," the Duke replied, "until we have communicated with the Duc de Colignac and the remaining Vendée leaders in France. You must tell them your news, de la Motte, and in the meantime we can only watch over His Majesty and see that no harm comes to him. I for one shall wish to see him at the first opportunity and assure myself that there is no mistake."

It was then that Mr. de Vendome put out his hand.

"Listen," he warned them. "What is that?"

There was a sound of heavy footsteps on the stairs—on the landing—a great knocking at the door. Mr. de la Motte stood up.

"Come in," he said quietly.

The door opened slowly and they saw a man standing at the threshold. An ugly

pockmarked man with a broken nose, who smelled atrociously of balm of aloes.

"What do you want?" Mr. de la Motte asked him.

"I am a fever inspector," the man informed them. "What are you doing in this house, citizens?"

"I and my friends meet here occasionally," Mr. de la Motte told him.

"Over a bowl of camphor!" the man sneered. "And do you wear white cockades as a precaution against the fever?"

"Are you also a cockade inspector?" Mr. de Ma Motte gave him back his insolence. "We wear them because it pleases us to do so. As for the fever, there is no fever here."

"That's for me to say," the man retorted. "Take off your masks and let me see your eyes."

They did as he ordered and he came and looked at them closely, one by one, holding a candle up before their faces.

"Now I'll take your names," he demanded, pulling out a pencil and paper.

"What for?" they objected.

"What for? Because it pleases me to do so. Your names."

"Mr, de la Motte."

"The Duke de la Roche," Ducros knew all about him. He had peddled herbs in the street to keep himself from starving during his first winter in Philadelphia and later he had given dancing lessons. This Duke who had worn white in the Vendée.

"Mr. de Croisic." Ducros had heard of him too. He had worked in a bakery. A great noble in Brittany.

"Mr. de Vendome." Yes, the youngster. He had money, that one, Ducros noted in his report. Citizen Morris, the one-time American Minister to France, had helped to preserve a part of his family fortune for him. A dirty aristocrat, Citizen Morris. It was because of Vendome's money, probably, that the others had taken him so deeply into their confidence.

Ducros folded the paper and put it away.

There are two versions of what followed, Mr. de Vendome's and Ducros'. They should be read in that order.

The man stood up, Mr. de Vendome recorded, and went to the door.

"You will now accompany me," he announced.

Accompany him? Where? What for?

"To the Committe of Public Health. You are suspect, you disregard the regulations, you frequent a contaminated house."

They laughed at him. Contaminated house! There was no yellow flag on the house. There was no one living in the house.

"On the contrary," the man assured them. "There is a yellow flag on the house and my men have just removed a plague victim from the basement. I have witnesses to swear to these facts."

It was a trap. Mr. de Vendome saw the danger at once. There was no limit in this panic-stricken city to an inspector's power.

"He can have us put in the pest-house!" he exclaimed. "Do you understand, the pest-house! God knows who this man is or what he has against us, but he can have us put in the pest-house!"

"Precisely," the man grinned. "In the pest-house. It was very careless of you not to notice the yellow flag."

"But you've come into the house yourself!" Mr. de la Motte argued.

"For me it is different," the man explained. "I am an inspector and it is my duty to enforce the regulations. Come, gentlemen, my men are waiting below."

Mr. de Vendome had picked up the candle. In two strides he was at the door, peering at the man's face. Now suddenly he stumbled backward, around to the other side of the table, his countenance distorted with horror.

"Stand back!" he cried to his friends. "Stand back! Don't go near him! Mr. de la Motte, come away from the door!" His voice was shaking with terror. "Can't you see—he's got it—he's got the plague—look at his face!"

The man took one leap into the room while they flattened their bodies against the wall, putting the table between themselves and his gesticulating figure.

"Thunder of God!" he bellowed. "What are you saying—the plague—"

"Keep away from him!" Mr. de Vendome was shouting. "Look at his face—it's already changing color!"

The man nearly went out of his head.

"It isn't true, it isn't true!" he kept imploring them. "Tell me it isn't true—the plague, I haven't got the plague! Oh, my God—look at me, there's nothing the matter with me— Look at me—don't turn your heads away—look at me, look at me!"

He was screaming, slobbering tobacco juice from his quid, clawing at them across the table, actually stuffing camphor from the bowl into his mouth. A revolting sight.

"He'll be dead in a few hours!" Mr. de Vendome made himself heard above the din.

The man turned with a yell and ran out of the room and down the stairs, covering his face with his hands. They heard him in the street, shrieking. A carriage went clattering away on the cobbles. Mr. de Vendome leaned against the table and laughed until he nearly choked.

"That fellow may die of it now from fear—I hope he does," he finally managed to tell the others. "But of course he hasn't got the plague at all."

"Never before," the Duke observed, "have I seen a human being eat camphor. How ill that disagreeable man is going to be!"

They went home. And there was a yellow flag on the house.

Ducros' version is quite short. A single paragraph at the end of his report.

I decided it would be too dangerous to attempt the pest-house idea. Having obtained my information, I considered it prudent to depart from that hell-hole of a Philadelphia as rapidly as possible. I was already beginning to feel ill myself, and at Trenton I passed a bad twelve hours. I had fearful pains at my stomach. Sapristi, what risks I am obliged to take! But now I have an excellent plan.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRINCETON RELAY

TIME passed. Ships went back and forth between America and France and were detained in the French ports, some of them, others captured by British privateers, one at least wrecked in the West Indies. Dispatches were lost, reports had to be duplicated, Mr. de Colignac was in Switzerland and could not be reached for a long time. Ducros waited for instructions, and when they came it was only to tell him to go on waiting. The Directory in Paris was too busy with other matters—General Bonaparte's war in Italy, the campaign along the Rhine, the armies of the Republic sweeping across Europe with the drummer boys out in front.

Splendid soldiers, these drummer boys. Heroes already, like that boy of the Army of the North who slipped across the Austrian lines and drummed his solitary charge, to make them think that the French had broken through and were taking them in rear. A boy of fourteen. Magnificent urchins, fourteen, thirteen, twelve years old, waifs, sometimes, runaways, nameless little vagrants come to join the troops and no questions asked.

A boy who wants to be a soldier? Is he tall enough? Can he manage the sticks? Give him a drum, then, and a cap with a tassel, teach him to beat the charge. Give him a name, too, if necessary, a name to put on the rolls, if he can not remember his own, a name chosen at random because he squints or because he has big feet or because his hair is red. The name of the place where he enlisted. Any name at all.

Such a boy as Louis Valmy, whose name appears on the rolls of the Army of the Rhine in 1797. Thirteen years old—actually twelve and some months—place of birth unknown, parents deceased, occupation vagabond. Drummer boy in the first regiment of the line. Army of Egypt in 1798. Lieutenant after Marengo in 1800. Dispatch rider to General

Bonaparte, First Consul, in 1801. Transferred, in 1802, to the Secret Police, American Section.

One records these meager facts. One listens with interest for a moment to his drumming, for this drummer boy is to be the famous Number Seventeen.

AT BROOK FIELD there was a new groom of the stables to replace the lost Ducros. Mr. Mercier complained once or twice to Abigail Moore that certain suspicious individuals had been seen loafing around the estate. There was one night in particular when all the dogs began to bark and Giles swore that he had seen some men in the shrubbery. Roger Moore doubled the night watchmen and Theodosia harangued the authorities of Greenwich on the subject of house breakers.

And Mr. de la Motte and three gentlemen came to call. Mr. Mercier was delighted to have visitors to talk French to, and when the boy returned from his ride he was brought in to see them. Mr. de Vendome, who reports the episode, had of course never seen the Dauphin, Mr. de Croisic, only once long ago. It was the opinion of the Duke de la Roche which was important. The boy was introduced—they had decided among themselves not to make any ceremonial ado over him in any case—and the Duke stood him up between his knees. Mr. Mercier had left the room to fuss over the refreshments.

"Let me look at you," the Duke suggested—but it was Francis who startled them all by suddenly clapping his hands.

"I know you!" he laughed. "I've seen you before!"

"You've seen me?" the Duke asked him. "Where do you think you ever saw me before?"

"In the woods," Francis told him. "Before I came to America. You were one of the gentlemen in white."

He had not recognized Mr. de la Motte, but the Duke, who was older, had probably changed less in appearance.

"You are a very bright boy to remember that," the Duke smiled, with a glance at the others. "But you must not tell a soul. It would get me into trouble and you wouldn't want to do that. Will you promise me?"

Francis promised and he must have kept his word for no trace of this incident appears in any record except Mr. de Vendome's.

"Now tell me, since you remember faces so well," the Duke inquired, "did you ever see this lady before?" And he handed the boy a medallion which he had taken from his pocket. It was a miniature of the Queen of France.

Francis hardly glanced at it.

"No, sir," he replied and handed it back. Mr. Mercier came bustling in with the Maderia and cakes.

A little while later the gentlemen from Philadelphia left.

"Well?" Mr. de le Motte wanted to know right away. "Was I right? Is it the boy?"

"Oh certainly," the Duke admitted. "Of course it's the boy. I knew right away. But isn't it pitiful? He recognized me, but he didn't recognize his own mother when I gave him the picture."

He took it out again to show them—a portrait of Marie Antoinette in court dress, with jewels and a tremendous feathered wig.

"Oh, it's not surprizing," Mr. de Croisic remarked. "He was very little in those days. She was never dressed like that during the last months they were together."

"No, it's not surprizing," Mr. de Vendome agreed. "But still it's very sad!"

OF COURSE Ducros had blundered terribly. By serving as a groom at Brook Field and then deserting his post he had made it dangerous to risk his being seen by any of the men on the estate. In the same way, because of his attempt to put into execution his pest-house idea he had rendered it imperative that he keep out of Mr. de la Motte's and his friends' sight. Throughout his career in America

until the arrival of Number Seventeen he seems constantly to have gone off at half-cock, rushing into situations which left him each time a little less competent to manage his affair of watching the Dauphin and keeping in touch with the royalist group at Philadelphia.

He must increasingly hold himself in the background, avoid the vicinity of the very people he was supposed to be observing, rely more and more on the aid of assistants clumsier yet than himself, share his knowledge with an ever widening circle of indiscreet accomplices. A very energetic man, this Ducros, up to a certain point quite intelligent, but hasty, imprudent, lacking in judgment and foresight.

Because his intelligence told him that he had behaved stupidly, and with an obstinate desire to retrieve his mistakes by a single adventurous stroke which would earn for him the substantial gratitude of the French republican authorities, Ducros embarked upon an enterprise which was destined to produce consequences the gravity of which it would have been impossible for him to anticipate. Ducros determined to seize the person of the Dauphin, place him aboard a ship at Philadelphia and convey him to France. What Ducros apparently did not realize was that while the gentlemen at Philadelphia were watching the Dauphin and he himself was watching them he and they both, in turn, were being watched from an absolutely unsuspected quarter.

It was in the spring of 1798, Minister Pinckney had been given his passport by the French Directory, and then sent back to France with Commissioners Marshall and Gerry to negotiate with Citizen Talleyrand concerning the restrictions to which American ships were being subjected in the French ports—restrictions which were the subject of the bitterest complaint and resentment in all shipping circles throughout the country. The national temper was on edge, the presses were pouring out pamphlets condemning "Dear Sister France," the Republicans with their tricolor cockades were coming home more and more frequently with broken heads received at the hands of violent Federalist mobs.

New York was already uproarious with strife when in April Mr. Adams, the new President, informed the nation through Congress that the mission of the Commissioners to France had failed and that the country must prepare for the worst in order to preserve its honor.

"Millions for defense, not one cent for tribute!"

Mr. Pinckney's famous phrase spread along the seaboard as fast as the post riders from Philadelphia could gallop. Congress called for frigates; subscription books were opened in the coffee houses; at New York the merchants raised thirty thousand dollars in one hour. The taverns rang with toasts to "the rising Navy," to "the wooden walls of Columbia" and to the destruction of the Gallic cock by the American eagle.

Every youngster in town, including Francis—who was always threatening to run away to sea—suddenly clamored to be a "loblolly boy," or a "reefer" in a blue-and-red midshipman's coat with brass buttons. When the Republicans tried to ridicule the "war hawk" President and his sailors—"John Adams's jackasses"—they were drowned out with patriotic songs. The streets were roaring all night with:

> "American, then fly to arms,
> And learn the way to use them;
> If each man fights to defend his rights
> The French can't long abuse them.
> Yankee Doodle, mind the tune,
> Yankee Doodle Dandy!
> If Frenchmen come we'll mind the tune,
> And spank them hard and handy!"

In all the confusion of these turbulent days Ducros made his arrangements and awaited his opportunity.

The moment came, on a day in early May. Roger Moore had taken Francis to the city to inspect the new ships building in the yards—a sight from which he had been able to drag him only with the greatest difficulty, so keen was the boy to become a sailor—and to wind up the outing at the Park Theater watching

Mrs. Melmoth in "Love Makes a Man," followed by the farce "Selina and Azor." They sat in a box in the candle-lighted brilliance of the great pink-and-gold auditorium. Ducros was in the gallery among the gods who were amusing themselves by throwing fruit and chop bones at the gentlemen in the pit, howling at them to take off their hats.

It was a riotous evening. Some men were run out of the gallery for trying to sing the "Marseillaise" while the audience stood up on its seats and hooted. The entire house joined in the chorus when the band played the President's March, shouting the new "Hail Columbia!" words—all but Mr. Brockholst Livingston who sat in his box, glaring at everybody, and let himself be pelted with bottles rather than join in. Francis enjoyed himself hugely and nearly fell over the railing in his excitement.

Roger Moore described it all very vividly to his sister and to Jumel, for immediately afterward a dreadful thing occurred. They had gone to supper next door at the London Hotel during the intermission between the play and the farce and, just as they were settling down to their pasties and Madeira, there was a tremendous commotion out of doors, hooting and booing, and a lot of people stramming up and down the roadway. Everybody went to the windows or crowded out to the door to see what was happening, and of course Francis must go and dodge under the arm of Mr. Dyde, the proprietor and poke his nose into the tumult. Still, he was right there in front of the steps.

"He was never out of my sight except for a second," Roger Moore kept assuring Abigail later.

It was Brockholst Livingston being mobbed as he came out of the theater. Nicholas Fish and James Jones were shaking sticks at him. It seemed that Mr. Jones had tried to cane him and that Mr. Livingston had challenged the latter to a duel. The crowd was pushing and shoving and taking sides in the dispute, while fists were already flying in the street without any challenges or formalities. In the windows of Dyde's gentlemen were laying wagers that Livingston would "get" his man the next morning at Weehawk or in Lover's Lane, if they fought up there. The turmoil passed on. Roger Moore turned aside a moment to enter a bet on the book, and when he looked around again Francis was not there.

The boy had simply disappeared, and he did not return. Roger Moore sent a messenger to Jumel's, and together they searched the town. The ferries, the stage line terminals, the gardens, even the jail—there was no trace of Francis. He had vanished.

"Take my word for it," Jumel insisted, "he's gone and hidden himself on a ship."

It was possible, of course. He could have run away to the wharves and climbed aboard some vessel, or gone out to the fleet in the Bay more probably and enrolled himself as a powder monkey loblolly under an assumed name.

"They'd take him like a shot," Roger Moore admitted. "They're looking for boys. And it would be useless to make inquiries. He'd know better than to give his own name and they wouldn't let you inspect the crews. They're sailing on this tide. Do you really suppose he's done that?"

Jumel was almost certain of it. Every lad in town was crazy to go to sea, and Francis had talked of nothing else for weeks. He was big and strong, and a Yankee now to the roots of his hair. The fact that the American navy was going out to fight the French meant nothing in his patriotic young life.

"But what will Axel de Fersen say?" Roger Moore groaned.

"What can he say!" Jumel laughed in spite of his dismay. "He wanted the boy to grow up an American. Well, he has! And he's done what any other American boy of spirit would do. Mr. de Fersen has only himself to blame."

"But I should have taken greater care!" Roger Moore was in despair. "I should never have let him go out into the street. I was responsible for him."

"You couldn't be watching him every second," Jumel objected. "He could have run away from Brook Field just as well. A boy like that isn't to be kept in a bandbox, you know! After all there are worse things than going to sea. And the more I think of it the more convinced I am that's what he's done."

And he was right, apparently. For several hours later, while they were still storming at the Collector of the Port to cause a search to be made of all shipping, a note was left at Dyde's for Roger Moore. No one took any special notice of the messenger. A note from Francis in his scrawly handwriting, somewhat scrawlier than usual. He was gone for a sailor on a frigate. He was sorry, but they need not try to stop him as he had not used his own name. The ship was sailing immediately. There was talk of Tripoli as a destination.

There was nothing to do except return to Greenwich and send a copy of this distressing epistle to Mr. de Fersen. There is no record of his answer.

But of course Francis had not gone for a sailor on a frigate at all. He was in a coach at that moment trundling down to Princeton in the company of three lugubrious characters bound for Philadelphia. One learns these facts from Ducros who was riding ahead of the coach. It was Ducros who had sent the note to Dyde's from Paulus Hook, Ducros who had forced the boy to write it under threats of immediate violence.

His report from Trenton reads:

> *I thought it best to put the Greenwich people off the scent. I mentioned Tripoli so they would not worry about him for some time to come. The idea occurred to me just as we were reaching the Jersey side in the skiff—we did not use the regular ferry of course—after we had bundled him away from Dyde's. I threatened to throw him in the river if he did not write as I said. So far affairs have progressed extremely well.*

So it seemed to Ducros, riding ahead of the coach. He was evidently enormously pleased with himself. He would have been less jubilant possibly if he had known who was riding behind the coach.

ON THE morning of May seventh, Mr. de Croisic leaned out of the window of the room at the College Inn at Princeton which he had been obliged to share with three strangers, two in a bed. He had gone to the window, he explained to his friends afterward, to look at the College of New Jersey across the road, but he found himself looking instead at a big stage coach which had just come rolling into the tavern yard. A mud-spattered coach drawn by four jaded bays, with all the leather curtains carefully buttoned down, from which a boy and three dirty ruffians wearing tricolor cockades were alighting. Mr. de Croisic was on his way to New York to visit Brook Field—they took it in turns—but it seemed that this was no longer necessary since there was the master of Brook Field himself, standing under the window in very disturbing company.

Mr. de Croisic withdrew from the window and went down-stairs. The New York stage was in readiness to leave, and the passengers were hastily finishing their breakfasts of cheese and hung beef. Mr. de Croisic himself had only wished for some coffee and a roll, and had purposely delayed going down into the crowded room until the last moment. Now it seemed that his plans were unexpectedly changed.

"Have my portmanteaux unstrapped," he ordered the landlord, "and bring around a gig to take me back to Philadelphia."

The New York passengers were climbing into the stage. In a moment it rolled out of the yard with one vacant seat. The tavern became suddenly very quiet after the outcry of departure. Mr. de Croisic took a table in a corner recess where he could hear what was going on in the back room and sat down to wait for his breakfast. And he had changed his

mind about the breakfast, too, for he told them to bring everything that they had and then not to disturb him under any circumstances.

The three men in the back room were somewhat drunk or they would not have talked so loud in a public tavern, even if they did suppose that every one had left with the New York stage.

"Here, aristocrat," they were laughing. "Eat your bread and drink your coffee. And remember, one word and you die!"

"Put some brandy in it," one of them suggested. "The little federalist looks cold."

"I don't want any more brandy," Mr. de Croisic heard Francis mumble. The boy was tipsy.

"Do as you're told, and drink," they insisted. "Drink to the French Republic, One and Indivisible."

The boy must have done so, for they all roared with laughter.

"Now sing," they commanded. "Sing the song we taught you."

The boy began to sing in a wavering voice filled with tears. A dirty song about the Queen of France.

"I could hardly keep in my seat," Mr. de Croisic told the others when he described the scene to them later.

"Listen to him!" the men guffawed. "We must teach him the "Carmagnole" so he can dance when the French come to hang that little fat pig John Adams."

"Mr. Adams isn't a little fat pig!" the boy flared at them, so ludicrously and so courageously.

"Yes, he is," they maintained. "A little fat pig like Louis Capet. You know who Louis Capet was, don't you?"

"No. I don't know Mr. Capet."

"Ho!" they howled. "He doesn't know Mr. Capet! Well, Mr. Capet was a fat pig like Adams and his wife was an Austrian sow and they got their heads chopped off!"

"I don't care," the boy retorted. "Mr. Adams isn't a pig."

"No?" they teased him. "What is he then, King of America?"

"Of course! All federalists want to be kings! Perhaps the little Citizen thinks he will be king one of these days?"

"Would you like to be king?" The joke pleased them enormously. "Answer us, brat, would you like to be king?"

"Bah—stop kicking him. He's sleepy."

"Ho! The King sleeps. The King is drunk!"

They fell to arguing among themselves then—what else Ducros would have for them to do when they turned the boy over to him at the Red Bonnet in Philadelphia—while Mr. de Croisic listened and drummed his fingers on the table. There was no question but what these men knew that the boy was the Dauphin. This was a political kidnapping, not a mere attempt at ransom as he had at first imagined.

Mr de Croisic had finished thinking. He glanced out of the front windows, saw his gig waiting in the courtyard, and put some money on the table. Enough to pay for all the hung beef which he had not touched. Then he dropped a biscuit on the floor. It rolled under the table. Mr. de Croisic dropped another biscuit. This one rolled out into the space before the open door leading to the back room. Mr. de Croisic leaned out very slowly to pick up the biscuit and took one quick look into the other room. The three men had their backs to him, all bent over the table watching something one of them was drawing. The boy was on the other side of the table blinking stupidly at them with his face all flushed. Behind him was an open window.

Mr. de Croisic planted his hat firmly on his head, loosened his pistols, gathered his cloak around him, took his cane and stood up. Three steps into the back room, a good crack at the unsuspecting drunken heads with his cane, a grab for the boy in the inevitable confusion, and out of the window into the courtyard.

"God knows it was a poor enough plan," he confessed afterward to Raoul de Vendome, "but there was nothing else I could do."

Mr. de Croisic took one step into the room. Nothing happened.

He took a second step into the room and Francis opened his eyes wide and stared at him. Mr. de Croisic put a finger to his lips and motioned to the open window. Francis just stared.

Mr. de Croisic took a third step into the room—and some one jumped on his back from behind.

"Mind your heads there! Grab hold of the boy!"

Mr. de Croisic had forgotten the coachman who was having his breakfast in the other corner of the room. They all went down in a heap.

Mr. de Croisic came to with a furious pain in his head to find himself sitting in a chair, dripping wet from the water the tavern people had been throwing at him, in the presence of several strangers —not the men who had been with Francis. Those fellows, he soon learned, had gone in a tremendous hurry with the boy. It was only after their departure that the servants had found Mr. de Croisic stretched out on the floor of the back room. These new gentlemen had just arrived. Very distinguished gentlemen, four of them, smartly dressed in the European style, foreigners evidently, very elegantly powdered and frilled. They were most sympathetic.

"The scoundrels!" they kept exclaiming. "To think that a traveler can not sit quietly in a tavern without being set upon by ruffians! What manner of tavern is this you keep, landlord?"

Mr. de Croisic had of course been obliged to invent a false account of his misadventure, It was nothing, he now assured them. The men had been drunk. They had probably taken offense because the boy had attracted his attention. He had seemed inquisitive, perhaps!

"Still, that is no reason for hitting a citizen over the head with a bludgeon!" one of the gentlemen observed. "If I were to pay attention to a boy at a tavern I should not expect to be murdered for it—even in America."

The others all laughed, with little bows. This gentleman was obviously some one of consequence. A short, rather pompous little man with reddish hair, who carried himself with great dignity and fairly twinkled with diamonds.

Mr. de Croisic was trying to remember where he had seen him before but the important thing was to get to his gig and away to Philadelphia after the coach as quickly as possible. They would have detained him, protesting that he was in no condition yet to travel, but Mr. de Croisic insisted that he must go. He had extremely important business in Philadelphia, he explained. The strangers, it appeared, had come up from New Brunswick to visit the College.

"I have always wished to see the institution in which Colonel Burr received his education," the gentleman with the diamonds remarked.

It was only when Mr. de Croisic had climbed into his gig, just as the postillion was whipping up, that he realized the identity of the little man with the reddish hair. A groom came out of the tavern calling to the stable boys for his carriage. Of course, Mr. de Croisic remembered. How stupid of him to have forgotten! But his head was ringing like an anvil and his stomach was in rebellion.

"The carriage of His Excellency, the Spanish Minister Plenipotentiary!" the groom had shouted.

Don Carlos Martinez de Yrujo. If Mr. de Croisic had not been in such a state over the Dauphin it might have occurred to him to wonder why Don Carlos, that very fastidious diplomat, should have chosen to be on the roads at quite so early an hour, breakfasting at the Princeton relay. But Mr. de Croisic had other things to think about.

"Drive like the wind," he ordered his man. "Belly to the ground. Fresh horses all the way!"

TO BE CONTINUED

Sam Dreben Felt Safe

BY

MEIGS O. FROST

IT WAS in Nicaragua, in 1910. The revolution that was to seat Estrada in Zelaya's palace was in full blast. General Gabe Conrad (now a salesman out of St. Louis and New Orleans) commanded the American battalion with the revolution. The Americans had made a forty-eight-hour forced march through deep swamp to attack the Federals, strongly entrenched outside La Libertad.

The little outfit of soldiers of fortune advanced down a steep hill. There was only one gully down which they could pass. It was narrow. They advanced single file. Behind them their two machine-guns were placed in thick bush to cover their advance. Ahead of them the Federals had riflemen and a machine-gun behind a semicircular stone barricade. And that Federal machine-gunner knew his stuff.

"Eagle-Eye" Pat—they never knew his other name—was first. He dashed down the gully through a burst of machine-gun fire that seemed to hit every square inch of ground he traveled. He disappeared behind a rock. He didn't come out. The line halted, ducked for cover and shouted to Pat to learn whether he was alive. Back over the rock floated choice curses in Irish and Spanish. Pat was shot through the arm. Another bullet had drilled his canteen, emptying it. He wanted a drink right now. The Federals couldn't see him, but he couldn't see them either. The Federal machine-gun punctuated his shouts. Bullets ripped through the bush.

The Americans poured machine-gun and rifle fire into the Federal barricade while Louis Grimer dashed toward the rock behind which Eagle-Eye Pat had vanished. Half-way down the gully Grimer went down with a bullet through his ankle. He weighed more than two hundred pounds. He couldn't walk, but he dragged himself behind a bush on that slope and played ostrich. Bullets thudded all around him. Ducked low, he looked back over his shoulder. Too much of him seemed exposed to fire on that slope. He tried to squat lower. Up came his head. He ducked again.

"He's like a bally rocking-horse!" shouted Howard, an Englishman with the Americans.

Homeric laughter roared above the firing.

"Rube" Elliott (later, in peace, he was drowned) without a word, rose and leaped down the pass to drag Grimer to safety. He didn't even try to take cover. Straight into the zone of fire he bored, ran to Grimer's side and dragged him behind some rocks. Nobody ever knew whether the Federal machine-gun jammed or whether the Federal machine-gunner paid his salute to cold nerve. But after the first two jumps Elliott took, not a shot was fired until after he and Grimer were safe.

Sam Dreben (General Hines, U. S. Army, said of him: "He's the greatest fighter the Jews have had since Joshua!") turned to Tracy Richardson.

"Come on, kid," he said. "You and me, we got to get that machine-gun or it's curtains for all of us."

Dreben and Richardson started on their bellies to make a detour and flank the barricade. They dropped fifteen feet

down another gully thick with bush and started crawling blindly toward the sound of the machine-gun. From bush to bush they crawled, looking, listening. The fire ceased. They went forward swiftly to an open space and stood up to get a better look.

Seventy-five yards in front of them a burst of machine-gun and rifle fire crashed out. Bullets were spattering all around them. Sam Dreben spun around like a top and fell. Richardson threw himself down on the ground.

"Are you hit bad?" Tracy called to Sam.

From behind the bush where he had fallen rose Sam Dreben's laughter.

"They got me in the hip," called the Fighting Jew, "but the sons-of-guns dassent kill me. There ain't a Jew graveyard in all Nicaragua!"

Richardson crawled over to him. Flat on their stomachs they worked scooping up little rocks and piling them in front of them. From behind their rock piles they got busy with their rifles. Both were dead shots. They pulled trigger at everything they saw move near the Federal barricade. Three men leaped and dropped. Then the rifle fire of the Americans farther up the gully cut the branch of a tree over the Federal barricade so that it sank across the top of the machine-gun. The gunner leaped up and slashed at it with his machete, to clear it away. Dreben and Richardson fired at the same time. The machine-gunner dropped, shot through the body.

"Come on, kid, let's get 'em!" called Dreben.

Side by side they dashed at the barricade. Dreben's flesh wound in the hip had not broken the bone. Over the pile of stones they hurled with clubbed rifles. There was the heavy Maxim, loaded, ready. But every man of the Federal gun-crew was dead. In the bush behind the barricade Federal riflemen opened fire on the pair.

Dreben and Richardson grabbed the machine-gun, swung it around and routed them.

Down the hill came whooping the American battalion. La Libertad was taken.

And that night all through the camp men roared over Sam Dreben's latest comedy line:

"The sons of guns dassent kill me. There ain't a Jew graveyard in all Nicaragua."

A Border Patrol accepts an invitation

Company for the Night

By BARRY SCOBEE

A PUZZLING set of circumstances, to say the least, surrounded old Hennepin Dorsey. He roused from his siesta on the counter of his little store, where a sack of beans had been his pillow, and went outside with a worried and inquiring look upon his ordinarily clean-shaven, pink and quizzical countenance.

To his astonishment, a man stood off a little way at the edge of the bosky, looking at the store as if in doubt about coming on up. The man, a Mexican in blue overalls and a small soft hat, was the first soul Dorsey had seen this day, for something strange had happened to the country.

The people appeared to have vanished.

In the last four or five days hardly a person had come to the remote little border store to trade. Dorsey was so glad to see this man that he started to call, but checked himself in a flash of caution and searched the world around about with a suspicious eye.

Hot sun and dazzling heat. Willows that shut off a view of the Rio Grande. Dusty mountains across the river in Mexico. Vast shimmering space to the westward. It would have been vast shimmering space to the east and north also except that a close-up hill restricted the scope. And not seeing or hearing anything newly suspicious in this emptiness, old Hennepin Dorsey did motion with his hand and call, garrulousness in his tone.

"Hi, you shrinkin' gazelle, come on up! What's holdin' ye back?"

The man straightened with the impulse to come but did not advance.

"Come on," reiterated Dorsey, "or I'll come down to you. I've got to have somebody to talk to for a while besides the singers on the phonograph. Come on now!"

At this the man came on, not too swiftly but no longer hesitant. When he got halfway up the path Dorsey opened with queries.

"Whut sky'd you fall out of, *hombre*? Where's ever'body hid out to?"

The man showed white teeth in a smile and spread his hands apologetically.

"Might of knowed it!" cried Dorsey in exasperation. "You no spika de Englace. Dumb-bell! How can we talk?"

The man began to speak rapidly, almost vehemently, in his own tongue, gesturing behind him to the southward with great earnestness.

"You mean," asked Dorsey when the

visitor stopped, "that they've all gone over into Mexico?"

The man gave a shrug of resignation and spoke one word, carefully—

"Cigar-eets."

"Yes, carnsarn ye," the old man burst out, "you know the one word ye want to know for your own benefit. Well, you don't get cigarets yet. Now I've got ye I aim to converse with ye. Set down."

Dorsey himself sat down on a bench on the little porch and began to tap beside him with his hand.

"Set do-o-o-own!" he commanded.

The man, realizing what the tapping hand meant, seated himself on the other end of the bench, smiling meekly.

"Yeah," said Dorsey, "you savvy when I say set down but if I say get up and go to work you no savvy. Well, I'm going to hold talk with you. My throat gets hoarse when I don't talk and I aim to supple it up."

"Cigar-eets," said the visitor again.

"Not till I invigorate my talker, sah. Ah-m!"

Old Dorsey cleared his throat. The very act loosened the talk that had got dammed up in him and he struck off at random.

"I'm Hennepin Dorsey. Ah-m! But never Henny, not even to fellers big enough to push me around. Drunk feller told me once it was a half-breed name—half Irish and half French. I dunno. Whadda you think?"

"Blaw-blaw-blo-cho," came a mellow, rumbling answer and a white-tooth smile.

"Bet your teeth," agreed Dorsey, "it's lonesome without anybody to talk to. I'm from central Texas myself where theh's plenty o' folks and plenty o' talk. Not many unedicated people like you to hamper us. But the onliest feller that I got it in for this side o' Hades is the San Anton real estate agent that caught me one day and traded me this store down here on the aidge o'—well, you prob'ly know what I refer to, *hombre*. He taken every cent I had, even my other undershirt offa the clo'es-line. And now something's happened to my trade. The folks have went."

"Bla-bla-oseeoo," replied the man earnestly.

"Right you are, sir," conceded the host politely. "Which reminds me that just before this slump set in I got a cheese from the wholesale house, and if some of you goat-herders and bean farmers don't come back and take to buying a few ten-cent wedges something dreadful is going to happen to it in this sultry weather."

The Mexican answered, and it seemed to Hennepin Dorsey that he said, "Wiggelly-diggeldy."

"I'll say wiggelly," said Dorsey. "And sniff-sniff too."

At that he laughed with the grim mirth of a merchant about to lose a valuable cheese.

"Come on, *hombre*," he invited, "join me in a laugh. Make this gabfest of our'n realistic. Ha-ha-haw!"

At this strange mirth the smile faded from the Mexican's swarthy countenance and he withdrew to a zone of safety near the edge of the porch.

"By heavings," swore Dorsey contritely, "I've got madder and madder because you wa'ant edicated and couldn't gab with me and I've made a fool of myself. You think I'm daffy in my wits."

He was humiliated by this and by his foolishness. Humbly he turned and pottered into the store. The Mexican followed. The place had one counter, some shelves, dirt floor and a sheet-iron roof, and it was as hot as an incubator, hatching all sorts of smells. The storekeeper laid a sack of tobacco and some brown papers on the counter. The customer paid with a pocket-polished dime, and spun a cigaret avidly.

"At that," mused Dorsey aloud, watching the Mexican suck the smoke, "I may be daffy and not know it, I've been by myself so long. Umm—I'm a mind, *hombre*, to show you what I have to put up with. Yup, I will. Come along."

The store sat upon the first shelf of the hill above the bosky lowland and the

storekeeper's house was on the next shelf above that. As Dorsey stepped from the store to go up the path the Mexican, on his heels, plucked at his sleeve and again spoke earnestly, waving largely toward Mexico. But Dorsey, having not the faintest idea what was meant, went on up the path. The Mexican followed.

The house had two rooms and a thatched roof. Dorsey went inside and moved a small square phonograph, finished with black imitation leather and nickel corners, to a goods-box by the window, cranked it and put on a record. After some rasping of the needle a great mealy-mouthed bass started up.

"That's what I have to put up with day in and day out," said Dorsey, sitting down beside the Mexican on the top step and putting his hands over his ears.

"Oooooh!" breathed the visitor in ecstasy.

In the next half hour Hennepin Dorsey played twelve records, all that he had. Every one was vocal. He bought the human voice for company through the long evenings—and nights and days. Some were women who shrilled, some men who rumbled, some quartets and some negroes who ragged and jazzed. Half the time helpless tears of emotion dripped from the Mexican's eyes. At about the fourth record Dorsey sadly addressed his guest.

"I've played 'em so much seems like they've gone mushy in my ears. Just heah and theah theh's a wa'm spot left."

His ears must have caught two of the warm spots this time, for twice a far-away gaze crept into the faded blue eyes of the lonely man; once when a woman sang a lullaby, a tender, crooning thing as soft as a baby's cheek; and again when not the voice but the accompanying violin whispered like a restless wild wind wisping over the prairie. And in these brief moments he was an old man dreaming, mayhap of other days and ways and women, of years bulging with youth and strength and sweet with hope.

But after these two short respites from the present, white man's jazz and negroes' syncopation and a wailing woman of a foreign race drove dreams away, and old Dorsey muttered curses as he kept persistently on to the bitter end with cranking and changing records. The latter run of pieces dried even the Mexican's tears and left the pair sitting disconsolate.

"So you see, Sir Drip," said Dorsey at last, "how low I've got for comp'ny. I ain't saw a white man in three weeks."

As if asked to, the Mexican began to talk. He talked swiftly and at length, and paused to look at Dorsey to see whether there was a flicker of comprehension.

"Nope," said Dorsey, shaking his head positively, "I don't get your argument. An' if it's credit ye want I'm tired o' listening."

He turned his bony shoulder. The Mexican was plainly worried, while Dorsey sat and gloomed out across the empty land with a bitter eye.

The emptiness bore but one human touch—a road lying away over the dun hills like a gray string. Out of sight ten or twelve miles distant was a remote and lonely outpost of the American Army huddled about a spring, with Sergeant Blake and a dozen privates for a garrison. Blake and his men were excellent company but they had not ridden to the store for a month or more. If only they'd come a-heavin' into sight now—

A curious expression gathered on the quizzical yet worried face. An inspiration, fathered by his great abhorrence of this still and empty land and his whelming loneliness, was a-borning.

The real estate agent, like a god juggling human destinies, had set him out here as a sport of the spaces, and now like another mischievous god he saw a chance to do a little juggling on his own account. A humorous thought twitched at his lips. He patted a foot uncertainly, and quit, then sat upright and stiff a moment while his idea crystallized to decision. Then he unbent like a spring and slapped the Mexican on the back.

"Come along, Paul Revere," he said, "you got another job."

He led and the man followed to the store where the tin roof was popping in the sun's heat. Old Hennepin Dorsey tore off a triangle of wrapping paper from a fat roll and, laying it down on the counter and bending over it, he wrote on it with a lead pencil for a while, quite laboriously.

Sargunt Blake—Come at once full force. Mexicans fixing to raid me tonight and pack off my goods no insurance.

Your friend,
Hennepin Dorsey.

He folded the scrap of paper and addressed it:

Sarg. Blake Rosalita spgs
via the hand of one Paul Reveer

"Theah," he said, handing it to the Mexican and watching to see whether the man recognized the name of Sergeant Blake in writing.

The man regarded the paper dubiously, unfolding it and, looking at both sides two or three times, he shook his head and handed it back.

"All right," said Dorsey, "see if this will improve your edication."

He put out another sack of tobacco on the counter, with papers and a small box of matches, a liberal wedge of cheese, a stick of candy and finally a double-handful of something that looked like brown chips.

"Dried peaches, a bit wormy but otherwise O.K.," he explained honestly, in English. "Now can you read that writin'?"

The man's puzzlement deepened. He refused the proffered paper and backed off with an embarrassed laugh.

Dorsey thought of something else. He spread the paper out, wet the pencil with his tongue and drew a picture in shaky lines and acute angles. He meant it for a soldier with a rifle at shoulder-arms, but when he showed it to the messenger the man still shook his head.

"Rosalita Springs!" cried Hennepin Dorsey in exasperation. "Soldiers—*Boom boom!*"

"Ah, Rosalita Springs!" ejaculated the man, his face brightening like a harvest moon. "*Si-i-i, señor, si-i-i! Blaw-bla-bow-wow-ichycoo!*"

"Yeah," said Dorsey, "I thought you'd savvy my picture drawing. Go on now."

As if he understood the order the visitor shook hands, babbling delightedly one moment and earnestly the next, cached the note and gifts about his clothes, shook hands again, backed out of the store and, after shaking hands once more, he looked at the sun's height in the sky and started off along the road as he had come, on foot.

"Don't overdo your pony in this wa'm weather, Paul," Dorsey called. "And hang up a lantern on the ol' church spire."

When he was assured that the Mexican was really on the way, the storekeeper went inside and lay down on the counter to angle for another nap.

"Lord," he said as his eyes began to droop presently, "if you'll overlook this one more fib that I've writ to the sergeant, I'll never tell another'n. S'help me, a-men."

WHEN Paul Revere raised Rosalita Springs, which consisted of one cottonwood tree, one adobe house, one row of bay horses and thirteen soldiers, he took certain precautions. He topped off with the stick of candy his excellent repast of cheese and dried peaches, and approached the place with nothing that he could be separated from save the tobacco and, knowing the military need for this, he cached it under a rock, except for a few pinches scattered about through his pockets for current use. These gringo soldiers were all right, but you never could tell when they might be in a taking mood. A fellow had to stay on their good side though, and here was a chance to make himself solid with them forever by reporting the storm that was coming. So now that the decks were cleared for action he lost no time in arriving.

A rabble of ten privates—the other two were on guard—and one sergeant, all bare-armed and bare-headed, in undershirts and without leggings, turned out

to welcome the first stranger to come by in a day or two or three. Paul Revere doffed his little soft hat and bowed in the polite Mexican manner.

"Ask 'im what the —— he wants," said Sergeant Blake, who had got a hard-baked crust in his twenty-one years of service.

Private Hopegath put the question in university Spanish. Paul Revere shook his head and from the sweat-band of his hat he removed the folded bit of wrapping paper and handed it to the sergeant. Ten privates, the two on guard not having arrived yet, crushed in on the non-commissioned officer to read their note. Some were tall and looked over, some were short and looked under, some crowded at the sides, but all read Hennepin Dorsey's frantic appeal for help.

"Another hike!" blurted big Churchbutler, and other men sent up their wail too.

"I've rode all day and my horse has about cast a shoe."

"Nothing but hike, hike, hike—"

"Shut up!" bellowed Blake. "Whadda ye think ye are, second lieuts? Now, that's more like it. Hold the position. Hopegath, you ask 'im again wot the —— this means, this raid that Hennepin Dorsey mentions."

Hopegath spoke again in his polite Spanish and the Mexican wrinkled a puzzled nose.

"You try it, Lundy," Blake ordered impatiently. "You've got a Mex wife."

"That's a lie!" spat Lundy, adding hastily, "Whoever told you lied."

Lundy turned to the messenger and labored with a few words; the man answered, and they talked back and forth briefly.

"He says," Lundy interpreted, turning back to the red-faced sergeant, "that he lives on this side and has been over to Mexico to borrow some bacon or soap, I think he says—"

"Surely not soap," put in some man in the crowd.

"—from his wife's aunt's cousin's family, or his son's grandfather, I don't quite get which."

"Well, wot about it, rum-dum?" roared the crusty non-com.

Lundy labored with more talk to and fro and again faced the sergeant.

"He says there's a big gang o' bandits on the other side waiting for dark to come and raid old Dorsey's store."

"Dorsey said that. What else?"

"He says as soon as he found out about it—he run into about two hundred of 'em hid in the brush—he came right over to warn us. He says he's born on this side and is American like us."

"Hang him!" somebody muttered.

"No," protested another, "he's got an American name. It's written on that note. Paul something."

"Aw, get your naturalization papers and learn something."

"He says," Lundy went on interpreting, "can you give him his supper?"

"That," said Blake, "is undoubtedly true. Ask him what old Dorsey done, what he said."

More talk, then—

"He says old Dorsey laughed and played on the phonegraph and wrote that note."

"Huh," sniffed Blake thoughtfully.

He took in the height of the sun and glanced at the drooping horses.

"I'll bet it's a scheme of old Dorsey," ventured little Burkee in his girlish voice, "to get us over there so he can talk."

"He wouldn't let us sleep till morning," said Callahan. "I can't go. My horse has about cast a shoe."

"I'll give you a better one than that," said big Churchbutler. "I'll bet four bits this Mex wrote the note himself to get us way from here so some of his kinfolks can sneak in and swipe our chow."

"Hear that, Sarg? It's a scheme to swipe our chow."

"Pipe down," growled Blake.

He was not moved by gabble on the right of him or gabble on the left. It was but his to do and decide according to the rules and regulations that flowed in his blood. And at last he had his plans marshaled.

"It may be one of the regular rumors," he said. "Probably is. But we go. Showski, go and sling out your supper."

"But it ain't half cooked," protested Showski, who was cook for the week.

"Serve it raw! Zurk and Bell, you stay here on guard just like you are. Flint, you and Perrin, you two stay with 'em. The four of ye keep the Mex locked up in the little room, savvy? Don't let him get away. If he ain't here when I come back I'll prefer charges against the four of you. The rest of you get saddled and fill your canteens and grab your supper."

"Sarg, my horse has cast his—"

"Go saddle. Get four extra bandoliers apiece, all of you. Now move and don't ladle any more back-slop!"

They moved. The four responsible for Paul Revere got around to take him to the little room. Pained surprize came over him and he began to argue. He talked high and fast. Lundy returned to listen. Other men stopped. This brought Blake.

"What's the matter here?" demanded he.

"He says," Lundy plunged in, "that he's got to go back. Old man Dorsey played music for him and he's got to go back and kick him in the river or in the slats, I don't quite get which—er maybe he says warn him by the river. Something. Anyhow he says he's got to go back."

"Your Mex talk is good," Blake sneered. "Lock him up. You other men step."

They stepped. The four had to drag the Mexican to the lockup, and he fought with all four limbs like a cat to keep from going in. The men finished their job at last with a kick.

The soldiers exercised their prerogative to curse the half-cooked supper. They cursed because they had to carry four bandoliers of cartrides and extra pistol clips, and they looked at the barren country and cursed it.

Most of them had ridden all day under a hard, hot sky to a remote point whence had come a report that Mexicans had crossed from the Mexican side and carried off two goats. Blake was a conscientious duty-doer. It was his business to watch these endless, empty miles. And he watched. Any rumor of raids from the lawless element dodging the law on the other side sent him and his men riding over the sandy and rocky wastes, through cactus, catclaw and mesquite, with little shade and less water. Big Churchbutler had a succinct and bitter characterization that epitomized it all:

"No ice, no newspapers, no women—"

Churchbutler, now, turned violently away from the plank table where the men were eating their half-raw food and flung his mess-kit, potatoes and all into a bush.

"I'd rather starve and be done with it!" he flared.

Burkee of the girlish voice reared back and gestured to the dun world around them melodramatically and began to mimic the phrases they all knew:

"No ice, no newspapers—"

Big Churchbutler turned on him, fury in his bronzed, big-nosed face. But Blake was there, and an invisible something of law and force that Blake objectified halted the savage movement. It petered out into a weak expostulation.

"By ——, Burk, you've got a crust to rawhide when men have to put up with this."

Churchbutler flung his arm in his melodramatic gesture to the still, crushing world around them. And the men snickered. Churchbutler's hate was so violent that it was humorous. He strode to the house in offended dignity.

"You won't have long, to suck your wrongs," said the crusty Blake.

In five minutes they were in their saddles and ready to go.

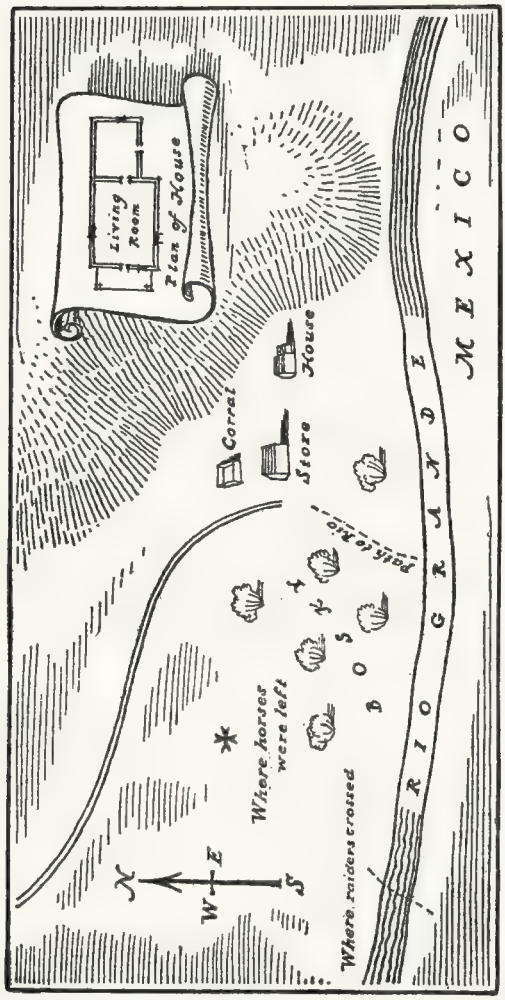
"Now lissen, you," said Sergeant Blake to the four men who were to stay back, "Perrin's in charge. If we ain't in sight by eight o'clock in the morning, Perrin, you ride or send a man to the end of the wire and tell the captain the situation."

"Eighteen miles to the phone," said Perrin, "and no sojers in between to protect us. All right, I'll tip him off. But supposin' they try to swipe our chow and

we're all slayed in defense o' the spuds—"

"I hope you are," said Blake. "Come on, men, let's go, it's nearly sundown."

SEVENTY-FIVE or eighty Mexicans—border riff-raff, whelps of the factional warfare that kept Mexico disturbed for years—lay concealed in a sandy dry-wash



among the thick willows on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande, a few miles from old Hennepin Dorsey's store. It was a question which were the hungrier—the scrawny horses that had stood hidden all day without food or water switching hissing tails at the flies or the lean men full of the keen fierceness and quarrelsomeness that hungry bellies give. It may have been the men, for suddenly two of them sprang up snarling like cats and dogs, with bared knives.

"The winner," interrupted an easy-going but arresting voice from beneath a willow, "will get ten lashes with a horse-whip—across the legs."

The men drew back from each other with amazing quickness, and a titter of laughter went among those lying thickly around under the branches.

"Juan stole my cigaret!" charged one of the angry men.

"He lies!" said the other. "He hid it in his hair and can't find it."

Laughter again from the prone men, and the easy-going, rumbling voice—Ramirez, leader of the outlaws.

"Where's the fellow with the comb?" suggested Ramirez. "Shake your mop, Chico, and let's see if Juan is right."

"It was the last cigaret in the troop," Chico went on aggrievedly. "I was saving it to dull my appetite till we got to the gringo's store."

Some one ran his fingers through Chico's bushy hair, and sure enough the end of a dry brown cigaret fell out. Men began to offer cartridges, knives and the cancellation of debts for it, but before the bidding could get anywhere it was interrupted by the arrival of a haggard looking fellow who came sliding down the sandy bank of the arroyo.

"Why didn't you go to the City of Mexico to hide yourselves?" he greeted in a surly manner. "I've been dragging through the sand all day looking for you."

"Bartolo!" came the shouts. "Bat! The bean scout. The spy."

"Report, Bartolo," ordered Ramirez, sitting up, while the men cocked hungry ears. "Is the coast clear?"

"Clear as this droughty sky. My teeth are as dry as pop-corn."

The nearest cavalier shoved a canteen into his hands.

"And food, Bat?" asked Ramirez when Bartolo finally finished his drink.

"At noon yesterday, my Captain, when I left the store the old bone-bag hadn't

sold a hatful from the truck-load he got five days ago. He has a cheese, sir, as big and yellow as the moon."

"Whew!" whistled a man.

"As big as a dishpan!" exclaimed another.

"Big as a tub!"

"That cheese is mine because I'm fond of cheese."

"That cheese," said Ramirez, pecking a finger at them, "will be divided equal among the men who like cheese, except that the half of a fourth will go to the lad who first lays his hands on it."

Ramirez was a big and shaggy man, without education but with the physical daring and the wit to hold pretty well in line every one of his lean wolves to the interest of the pack. He rewarded virtue and punished defection. His threat to whip across the legs was his style of simple shrewdness. A quirt on the naked shoulders may make a martyr of a man, but across the legs—Ramirez had tried it on one of his younger men, and the fellow had squirmed and danced ridiculously and the mob had howled with amusement. It had put a ticklish terror in all of them, or in the younger ones anyhow. Ramirez was shrewd enough not to try it on the older troopers, who would resist with knife or gun.

The chief possession of the leader, besides his guns, was a little brassy chain around his neck with a nickel-plated whistle on it, such as city policemen use. It was at the same time a symbol of his simplicity and his emblem of authority.

Thus it was with a simple, practical wisdom that he had planned the raid on Hennepin Dorsey's isolated store, and when toward dusk he had the last dry beef and parched corn distributed and the men were eating noisily he gave them a final summary of instructions.

"No bawling around big-mouthed after we get to the river, mind you," he warned. "Quiet! And no lighting of matches. We will meet two of our scouts and cross over to the gringo side in good order. We'll ride around the bosky and stop, and I and two or three others—though I could do it by myself, hah, yes—will go up and tie the old man. That done, you'll bring up your horses and we'll load the stuff in our packs and sacks and come away. No shooting. No good to kill the old American, probably. But," he added with a curious edge on his voice, "it's hard luck there aren't a few gringo soldiers to butcher."

This idea was applauded by cries and growls.

"All right," Ramirez concluded, shaking his last few grains of corn into his capacious mouth, "climb your horses and we'll be on our way to a real meal out of gringo cans."

It was dark when they straightened out on the march, and because they had to turn this way and that to avoid the sand washes and the willow thickets it was a great deal later when they arrived at the river. But their sounds drew their two waiting scouts, who made their presence known.

"All clear, eh?" asked Ramirez with his habitual complacency. "Is this where we cross?"

"It's not all clear!" answered one of the men with guarded impatience. "The soldiers at Rosalita Springs got wind and eight of the fools with the sergeant whose face is red have marched to the old man's aid."

The men, clustered around, froze with interest, so that even the horses, sensing suspense, were still and alert for a moment. Ramirez showed his ability to get to the point by his first question—

"Can we beat them to the store and get away?"

"No."

"So much the better. It is the will of God. It gives us honest and harassed Border men an opportunity to kill off a few gringo soldiers who have got themselves underfoot—as they killed my brother."

"And mine, my Captain!"

"And my father!"

A wave of fierceness went over the troop, like a smoldering fire always ready to flare, even though every man knew the

slain relatives had been raiding on the Texas side. And Ramirez was the fiercest of them all, somehow, as he spoke sententiously:

"We need but to lay new plans," he said, "to include nine gringo soldiers. We'll take our time and form a great circle around the store and strike before they know we're there!"

OLD HENNEPIN DORSEY sat on the porch of his thatch-roofed shanty and dubiously awaited the coming of the soldiers—if they should actually come. He couldn't think of a reasonable explanation to give Sergeant Blake for sending such a message. Sometimes a ticklish impulse seized him to go and hide in the bosky, but that wasn't quite the part of a man. He knew that he felt exactly like the boy who has sent in a false fire alarm and waits expecting every instant to hear the awful crash and rumble of the trucks.

He had seen the red sun go down in a stark and empty world, but as far as his gaze could reach along the gray string of a road there had been no sign of the little cavalcade. And now it had been black night for a long time. The stars twinkled, but somehow they only made him feel the lonelier.

He began to think about turning in and forgot the soldiers for a moment, to be jerked back to attention by the sound of hoofs yet some distance away on the rocky road. He sat up with a jerk. He wished to get up and run. But his feet did not move.

The horsemen came on so that presently the faint tinkle of accouterments reached his ears. Then abruptly all sounds stopped. But only for a minute. When they resumed the volume of sound was reduced, and Dorsey knew that only two or three riders were coming on. That, of course, was right. Blake would not come bolting up full force after receiving such a note. He might be suspicious of an ambush.

The nearer they came the more Dorsey's thoughts were in a jam. Suppose the sergeant should be pretty sore? Suppose he should curse?

Hennepin Dorsey swallowed, and tapped a foot. What had possessed him to send such a message anyhow? He knew that as a good host he should go down there and call a welcome. But he could not move.

Then the two or three horsemen stopped a little way from the store.

"Looks like we're too late," said a voice. "No lights or nothing. Hope the raiders left a little canned fruit at least."

"Or some of the old man's usual stale cheese."

"Hi-o, Mr. Dorsey!" It was Sergeant Blake's heavy voice.

At that Dorsey heaved himself up and answered, pretending not to have heard the approach.

"Uh—that you, Blake? You startled me. 'Bout my bedtime—snoozin'—"

"Seen anything of 'em, Mr. Dorsey?" asked Blake anxiously.

"Seen anything of who?" demanded Dorsey. "Oh, no, no. No, I haven't."

Dorsey made his way down the twisting path to the level of the store, and three horsemen came on up. The storekeeper was tongue-tied but Sergeant Blake was awash with questions.

"What's your latest information, Mr. Dorsey?" the soldier asked. "Just what do you know about the raiders?"

"Not—ah-m—not much," stammered the old man.

"Any more than what this Mexican told you that brought me the message?"

"Well—no."

"Just what did he tell you?" pursued Blake. "Let's see if he told me the same yarn."

"Well, you see, Sergeant Blake—ah-m—did you bring that good checker player along?"

"Say," demanded Blake, "what's wrong here? You trying to hide something? Mex comes a-telling that two hundred bandits are on the other side waiting till dark to raid your store, and you send for us, and now—"

"My goodness," said Dorsey dumfounded, "did he tell you that?"

"Why, didn't he tell it to you?"

"No—say!"

A light was breaking on the old man. He remembered that the Mexican had striven to tell something, and that he like a fool had failed to grasp any significance.

"Say," he blurted, "that note I wrote was a fake. I wanted some company—"

"Told you so!" triumphed little Burkee of the girlish voice.

"But that feller did try to tell me something," Dorsey went on. "I couldn't savvy him and he couldn't savvy me. My goodness, do you suppose they're going to raid me?"

"You're a fine old crow," said Blake. "I'll bet you put that Mex up to telling he had seen a raiding party across the river."

"No siree, I didn't!" denied Dorsey. "I wrote that note, no more."

"Well, he got the drift of the idear from you somehow. I'm a mind to arrest you and take you to the military authorities right now to be hung, you old fake!"

Blake got down from his horse and paced back and forth a few steps in the darkness, worried, then he reached a decision.

"We'll stay here tonight," he said. "Horses and men too tired to go back. May be some trickery afoot, here or at our camp, but we'll take our chances here. Burkee, you go tell Lundy to ride back along the trail two hundred yards and stay there as outpost till I relieve him. Tell Freed to stay there where we've stopped. And bring the others up."

"I'll holler and save me a trip," said Burkee.

"And let the raiders know wot we're doing? Go on!"

Burkee moved away. Blake looked at his watch with a little pocket light.

"Nine," he said. "Old man, get your flashlight. Want you to take me and one of the men down through the bosky to the river."

The rest of the soldiers had come up by the time Dorsey climbed the path to the house and got back again with his light. He led Blake and Private Callahan down to the point where the Mexican had stood looking up at the store. There they entered a dark and narrow path in the willows and reeds. In wet weather the place was a swamp but now the flashlights showed only dry, cracked silt on either side of the twisting trail, and a few pointed yellow leaves that had fallen.

It was a quarter of a mile to the shore of the Rio Grande. Blake remarked that once they got into the open along the water they would be able to hear men a long way up or down the stream—if there were any to hear.

"Catfish splash sometimes," said Hennepin Dorsey, "and sound like men."

"Can you catch 'em?" asked Callahan.

"Less racket, you two," admonished Blake. "Mexicans wear ears."

Immediately he caught his toe on a willow snag and sprawled headlong with a loud grunt.

"You boomed like a bullfrog," said Callahan unfeelingly.

Blake made no reply as he picked himself up.

They emerged presently on to the sandy shore of the river, dousing their lights. The water gurgled in little eddies and the starlight danced erratically in the depths. The three sat down. They could not see far in the black night, but they tuned their ears to hear up and down the stream.

Blake knew little of woodcraft but he had a certain common sense drilled into him in twenty-one years of service in the Philippines, Alaska and the States. Dorsey possessed the craft of any villager who swiped watermelons as a boy or fished occasionally in the countryside creek. He listened, though, with the anxiety of a man with a store to lose. Callahan's craft was commonplace too. Yet Blake could be amazingly patient, and he sat an example of quiet waiting for the other two. For a long time not a word was spoken and no sound was heard save the little ones of nature. And when at last the sergeant looked at his watch it was twenty-three minutes to ten.

"We've been here a half hour or better," he said, "and not a squeak. Let's go. I got little faith in these raid rumors any more. We've got to get some rest."

They returned to the store, talking more as they went, now that the sense of danger had diminished with the brief period of watching and seeing nothing to alarm.

At the store they found the five men waiting with their horses. The sergeant had all the animals unsaddled and turned loose in Dorsey's little corral beside the store. He directed Callahan and Churchbutler to sleep near the store so that they could be handily aroused for guard later on. Then he went afoot along the road for a good-night inspection and to give the outposts their orders.

He first saw Freed's horse but could not make out a man in the saddle. His two decades of experience warned him. He approached cautiously. The horse swung its head around inquiringly, making the saddle creak. Blake stroked it across the rump and passed on to its other side.

A shapeless hulk sat there against a boulder. The sergeant flashed his light, and the spot illuminated Freed, his arms across his knees and his head pillowed thereon.

A snore sounded, and another, and a third, while Blake stood with the light upon the culprit. Then Freed's body jerked. But his self-control was cunning, for instead of unfolding and springing up he did not move an inch, but spoke out with a fair show of indignation.

"You thought I was asleep, didn't you?"

"Get up!" ordered Blake. "Asleep on post!"

Freed got his five feet nine erect—a boy.

"Three months and thirty dollars," he twittered in attempted lightness, but there was a scared, remorseful look in his face. "Take that glim outa my eyes," he said.

Blake snapped off the light and without a word went along on the trail to find Lundy. The man was not by his horse, but as Blake approached he spoke from a clump of bushes a few paces away.

"That you, Sarg?"

"It's me, Sarg. Whatta you doing away from your horse?"

"Listening to the wind in these leaves and looking at the stars and wondering what it is a man's always wanting and never finds."

"You're daffy."

"If that don't suit you I've furthermore been looking for a cricket. When I sit still he see-saws but I can't quite put my fingers on him. How's that?"

"Have you heard anything—seen anything?"

"Not except what I've mentioned to you."

"You wouldn't. Here, take my watch—and don't get yourself kidnaped with it. At eleven o'clock—you got any matches to see the time with?—come in and bring Freed with you. Both of ye put your horses in the trap by the store. Then take a strolling post. Go down in the bosky once in a while and step out along this road a piece."

"Have a heart, Sarg."

"It's only till two-o'clock. Wake up Cal and Churchy then by the store porch and they'll relieve you. Tell 'em to stroll till daylight."

Lundy began to sing softly in a good tenor.

" 'Strolling through the shady lane with your baby mine—' "

"Lord," said Blake as he strode off, "you're a squaw man."

When the sergeant came up to Private Freed standing by his horse he said shortly that Lundy would give Freed his orders.

"Aw, Sarg, don't be so cold and distant," wheedled Freed. "You ain't going to have me tried because you thought I was asleep, are you?"

Blake went on without answering. His experience was that it did men good to let them sweat a little for their sins.

Back on Dorsey's premises he found four of the men wrapped in their blankets and snoring away on a level place between

the house and the store, and when he mounted the steps he came upon old Dorsey, wide awake, sitting on the edge of the porch.

"Get wind of anything?" asked the storekeeper anxiously.

"Nary a wind."

"Aw, that Mexican was a false alarm," Dorsey declared largely. "Set down, Sergeant, and gab a while."

"Nary a gab neither. I'm hitting the blankets."

"It isn't late—uh? All right then, take my cot. I'll not be using it."

"What's that?" said Blake. "Thought you just said it was a false alarm."

"Oh, I ain't sleepy," Dorsey evaded. "I'll prowl around, keep a little night-watch with the boys."

"You got a mind like a woman," said Blake, and went inside.

A smoky lamp was fluttering on the wall. The owner's cot was empty. Blake stripped to his socks, breeches and underwear, blew out the light and stretched out with a luxurious grunt or two, and was asleep at once.

SERGEANT BLAKE ordinarily slept as loggily as any tired soldier, but this night a hovering sense of danger and responsibility lightened his slumber and he awoke with a startled sense that some change had taken place. He knew even as he sat up that it was the wind, that it had risen and was tearing about. A loose leaf of the tin roof on the store was slamming and banging. And a similar roof above him, that had been covered with a thick thatch of the waxy candililla for the sake of coolness, was teetering and creaking under the pressure of the gale like a heavily laden wagon.

Now that he was awake, Blake arose and stepped out on the porch. He made out old Dorsey asleep on the bare boards with his back to the wind, snoring softly, his little watch in the night quite forgotten.

The wind was tossing the willows in the bosky into a roaring sea, and the loose tin was like some clanging scrap of wreckage on a derelict ship. It came to Blake that raiders could slip in close without being heard. He went down the path a little way in his bare feet where the sentries were. And he heard by the store a guarded call.

"Hey!"

"Aye, aye, sir," came the voice of Lundy, who had been in the Navy.

"What time you got now, old salt?" It was Freed.

"Oh, about one."

"An hour yet on guard."

"Don't go to sleep again, kid," said Lundy.

Freed laughed.

"I sure was dumb to the world," he declared, "when the sarg turned that spot-light on me. But he wasn't right sure of it. I fooled him proper."

Sergeant Blake itched to go down and give Freed the bawling out of his life and put him under arrest, but the rocky path hurt his bare feet. He wished for his shoes, and decided to go back and get them and make a tour of inspection into the bosky and along the road.

He had just turned and started back up the path when there came an explosion of cries like the war-whoop of red Indians, and a ripping volley of gun-fire.

Blake yelled and ran for the house. The four soldiers asleep on the ground kicked out of their blankets like wild men. Blake shouted for them to bring all their ammunition and come to the house. When the sergeant jumped to the porch Dorsey was just rising.

"I forgot to lock the store!" the old man exclaimed in consternation, and followed the non-com through the door.

Blake got to the cot, found matches in his shirt pocket and lighted the lamp, paying no heed to cracking bullets or to the soldiers leaping in. Then methodically he set it in a corner on the floor, out of the wind. It gave light enough for the men to see to get about without colliding, but not enough to make them easy targets for the raiders.

The men got to the windows and doors

and began to return the fire of the attackers. Blake took up his belt and automatic pistol and proceeded with a hasty survey of the situation. The front room had a door and two windows, the kitchen a door toward the bosky and a window in the rear looking up the steep pitch of the hill. Epstein was at the window pumping away. Blake saw a steady flashing of guns up on the ridge. He saw the same thing on the side away from the bosky and toward the road, and likewise all along the bosky's edge.

"They've got us surrounded," he called out over the blast of the guns. "They may try to rush us. Shoot fast and low, and keep yourselves protected behind the walls."

The house was built of adobe and the walls were thick, practically bullet-proof, but bullets were coming in at the doors and windows, as was attested by thuds and the tinkle of broken window-panes. The greater havoc appeared to be in the metal roof, where the enemy's lead was pinging and tearing. There was no ceiling, so that now and then a spent bullet dropped to the floor. The untrained enemy was shooting high.

The Americans loaded and fired with frantic haste. Blake found Hennepin Dorsey lying on his stomach in the front door firing a short carbine. The sergeant opened with his pistol on the flashes at the bosky's edge.

There came a shouting from outside of the house. It was Freed and Lundy, wanting to be let in. Hopegath called for them to come on, and they came piling in across the window-sill, Hopegath and Blake tugging to help them through.

"You're fine sentries!" Blake charged. "Letting 'em slip up on us this way."

"Aw, you couldn't hear it thunder in this wind," retorted Freed. "They exploded right under our nose."

"We turned the horses out of the trap," said Lundy. "One was killed already."

There came a rattle and crash of crockery in the kitchen, and old Dorsey growled that the raiders were breaking his dishes.

"The fools are getting ready to rush us, too," he declared.

It appeared that he was right. The initial yelling had been renewed and now there came the sound of a high, shrill, metallic whistle, and immediately the line of flashing rifles began to advance up out of the bosky.

"They're coming, men," Blake warned quietly. "Shoot low, 'way down. Make your shots count. We haven't any more ammunition then we need. And don't ever let them get in here on us."

"Whoopee!" yelled Freed exuberantly. "Come on, you Border bums, and get y'r chilli!"

A cry of unexpected savagery and blood-thirstiness answered him. Bullets slammed and tore through the roof and thudded against the walls, inside and out, and one knocked the rifle from Showski's hands to the floor. He cursed and picked it up and cursed again because the barrel was as "hot as a poker already."

Sergeant Blake was at first one window and then another. The main charge was coming from the bosky. The raiders stationed on the comb of the hill and those low down by the road were not advancing. They dared not do so lest they get into the zone of bullets from the other sides. Where they were stationed they were fairly safe, yet in a position to fire on the Americans.

Freed grunted suddenly, where he stood loading his rifle, and his knees gave way and he fell. Showski turned to his aid, but Blake bellowed that they had no time now to monkey with a wounded man.

This fact was obvious. The attack was rising to its height. The raiders were crawling and darting ahead and firing from over rocks; they were as near as the store on the front and nearer on the side toward the bosky. Epstein was at the kitchen door, prone on the floor. Blake joined him, and stood firing diagonally through the door. The sergeant was an expert pistol shot, having been present several seasons at Camp Perry. He threw into his shooting now every trained

sense for accuracy that he possessed, and he fired with great rapidity.

There sounded three short, shrill blasts of the whistle outside, and the enemy came on running and yelling.

The Americans, except Blake, had been using their rifles, saving their pistol clips, at Blake's orders, for just such a moment. Now, at a shout from the sergeant, they began to use their pistols. Not having to stop to reload their rifles, it was a little surprize for the enemy, this sustained, even increased, fire. And as slight a thing as it was, it broke the charge. The yelling fell away and there were cries of consternation out there in the darkness. Or it may have been Blake's swift firing that really accomplished the repulse. It was apparent in a moment that the first big rush was over.

The whistle sounded again and the firing ceased. The Americans started a derisive yelling and cat-calling, but Blake advised them not to be too noisy and cocky.

"It may be a trick," he said. "Anyhow they're not quitting. They haven't looted the store yet. Nor set fire to this thatch to burn us out—they'll think of it, don't ye doubt."

"You suppose so?" cried Hennepin Dorsey. "The stuff's wax-weed. It would fry us alive."

IN THE lull now the men turned to Freed. He was sitting on the floor by the lamp with strips from a bed-sheet tightly bound around his legs. He had wrapped his own wounds—three bullet-holes through the flesh of his legs half-way between hips and knees.

"Be with you in a minute," he said with an effort at lightness. "Let me lay in the door."

With the wounded man thus self-disposed of, Sergeant Blake turned his attention to Callahan and Churchbutler. At the first of the attack their rifles had been spitting from the rear of the store, but had disappeared. To Blake's call the two men answered from a patch of boulders on the slope directly between the house and the store, just below the rim of the second shelf, out of sight from the house. They would not come up, they said.

"They'll fire that candililla weed on you yet," Churchbutler predicted. "It's safer here, but not enough room for all of you."

"If we knew they would try to chase us out with fire," said Blake to the men about him, "now'd be a good time to get away—though I don't know where we could go. Might not be able to break the ring and get away. And if they fire us it may not burn us out—with this tin roof."

Uncertainty was the key-note of their position, though Dorsey at once had a suggestion to make.

"Go to the store," he said.

"Nope." Blake was positive there. "Its sides and back end haven't an opening. The front is too open, with two windows and a double door. We'd be like bugs in a quart cup."

Dorsey bewailed the fact that he had ever thatched the house with the weed. He had covered the roof to check the beating sun. The material was waste from the candililla shrub that had been boiled at the little plant down by the road and the valuable wax extracted. There was a great thickness of the waste on the roof, highly inflammable, weighted down with rocks tied together with ropes of twisted fiber and slung over the roof-peak.

"Well, don't worry over what you can't help," the non-com replied to the old man's talk. "We're still topside."

Blake got his watch from Lundy. It showed two o'clock. The fight had been going on over an hour. They could hardly believe it.

The pause in the shooting was broken now by a single shot. In a moment there was another, in a few seconds a third, and fully half a minute elapsed before the next. This went on for a little time, until it was apparent that the firing was progressing slowly around the ring.

Around and around marched that one shot at a time, from man to man. There

was something sinister about such deliberation.

Old Dorsey paced the faintly lighted room, back and forth, back and forth, forgetful of the infrequent bullets, always pausing at the door to peer out at the store. Finally at one of these peerings into the night he cried out in a startled manner.

"Look there!"

The soldiers crowded to the windows and the front door. The house was directly behind the store, but they could see a faint illumination extending out in front of the store building on both sides, whitening the bare ground, touching the threshing willows at the bosky's edge.

"They've lit my big hangin' lamp," said Dorsey. "The onliest thing I wouldn't let that real estate agent pocket. It was my wife's. They're robbing me! I'm ruint!"

Everybody kept glumly silent. Callahan and Churchbutler were directly behind the store also and could not fire on whoever was in front.

"You going to stand and gap?" Dorsey demanded. "If they loot me I tell ye I'm ruint, and I'm an old man."

Dorsey was halted in the doorway, and it was Sergeant Blake's turn to pace the floor, back and forth, worried.

"Once outside these walls," said Lundy, answering the old man, "they'd settle our hash. We'd better h. d. q. here till we have to move."

"Yeah," agreed the other men. "Sure, you betcha."

That slow shot marching around and around had a terrifying quality. But old Dorsey was being robbed, and he felt differently.

"What," he demanded sarcastically, "are soldiers paid for?"

"You don't like your company you got tonight, old man," said Lundy, but Blake checked the incipient word fight by a decision.

"We'll make a little sortie, Mr. Dorsey," he said. "I don't know what it will amount to, Two hundred bandits—I'll bet the figures are right for once!—are a handicap to eight able soldiers and one civilian, even if we are Americans. But we can't hide in here and let the cats eat the bird scot-free. Come on, Hopegath, you and Showski, we'll give 'em a little surprize at their Christmas tree."

The three, and old man Dorsey with his short carbine, went out along the shelf on the side away from the bosky and kept on stealthily till they had bent around far enough to see the raiders in front of the store. They made out men in the dim light carrying armloads of loot down into the blowing willows. At a word from Blake the four blazed away. But if they surprized anybody they were also surprized, for from close behind them a hot fire was immediately opened.

The Americans fled for the shack. It was all they could do except stay and be shot. Evidently the raiders on the ridge had sent down a squad to prevent any such enterprise as this.

There was another surprize too. Dorsey and three soldiers had left the house, but four soldiers returned. The fourth was Perrin from Rosalita Springs, as was revealed when he said hello in a kind of dubious way.

"What you doing here?" demanded Blake.

"Sneaked in through their lines," answered Perrin. "Been out there waiting for somehow to get in here without some o' you militia shooting me."

"I didn't say how—I said what are you doing here?" thundered Blake. "I told you to stay back in charge of camp."

"Oh," said Perrin. "The *hombre* we had locked up got away on us," confessed he in a small voice.

"Outwitted ye, I suppose."

"No. He said he had some tobacco hid under a rock by the road. We was short on smokin' so we— I took him out to get it."

"And he gave you the slip."

"While I was turning the stone over he jumped his horse and come tearing this way."

"Oh, you let him have a Government horse to use."

"Use? To ride, Sarg, a half-mile to the tobacco. But not a saddle, Sarg. Our saddles is saved. When he ran away I rode after him but he had that Jesse James hoss o' Bell's and what could I do? He let up though when I'd emptied my pistol at him, and I managed to keep in sight and sound the rest of the way. I know where he is now."

"Well? What's the catch? Go on."

"He's around on the other side of this bosky where the raiders are loading their loot on the horses. I followed him and almost stepped on the gang."

"That looks like he's in cahoots with the gang."

"Nope." Perrin was positive. "He was afraid of 'em. Stood off watching 'em."

"Why didn't you ride to the phone for help, rum-dum," asked Blake, "instead of coming in here?"

"Well, my horse got loose on me," Perrin confessed. "An' I came over this way to see how bad a hole you was in, and first thing I knew I was inside their lines. Maybe I couldn't get out, so I came up here."

"Idiot!"

"They loading my stuff on horses to carry it off?" demanded Dorsey as if the catastrophe had him stunned. "By heavings!" he cried. "They can't do it!"

He went striding back and forth.

"No siree," he kept repeating grimly, "they can't get away with that!"

The men fired a shot now and then from behind the edge of window or door to let the raiders know that the Americans were still on the job. Blake squinted out into the darkness frequently, a worried man. Once or twice he ventured outside, to return and hear Dorsey muttering disconsolately, "They can't do it!"

"It's getting late, or early," said Blake finally. "Maybe when they get the loot they'll go. They won't let daylight catch them on this side of the Rio, you can bank on that. They're always scared another bunch of soldiers will bob up and cut them off. If we can get our horses back we might give pursuit and recover some of your stuff, Mr. Dorsey."

"Lose half of it, I'm bankrupt," wailed the storekeeper.

They were interrupted by Callahan calling from the slope below.

"Whadda you want?" replied Blake.

"They're through with the store," Callahan said guardedly. "I sneaked around and saw. They're getting ready to pull out or something."

The soldiers all flocked outside to investigate, in great relief. But all that they could hear was the wind banging the loose tin and threshing the willows, and all that they could see was the blackness of the night.

They had scarcely got out when above the carnival of the gale there came a sudden yelling from the bosky. It was echoed around the compact circle. There was somehow finality in it. And as if it were a signal it was instantly followed by a sweeping gun-fire from all sides.

"Inside!" bawled Blake. "Get inside!"

"Man overboard!" yelled Lundy. "Give me a lift."

Blake and Lundy picked up a lank figure and carried it into the house and laid it on the floor, for Freed was on the cot. A match was struck. It was Hopegath, he who spoke university Spanish.

"Done for!" cried Burkee in his girlish voice.

"He never knew what hit him."

The men turned to their defense.

"Watch out for another rush," said Blake. "We've got to hold them."

But instead of a rush a fiery torch blazed near the store. It was swung like a sling and released, and it came sailing on the southwest wind straight for the thatched house.

TO THE breathless relief of the Americans, the fire-ball fell short, and the wind blew out a long ragged flame where it lay on the ground.

"Coal-oil rag weighted with a rock," said Blake.

As if the flung torch had been another

signal the firing stopped. Without knowing that they did so, the Americans ceased their fire also.

Another torch blazed in the bosky. As it was swung the soldiers began to shoot at it, and the thrower went down. That was evident from the antics of the flame. But another picked it up and flung it.

This second torch sailed high and over, and Epstein, running to the rear window, announced that it was burning on the hillside above. At this the Americans yelled tauntingly. But the enemy did not reply. There was something ominous about their silence.

"If we have to run the gauntlet, men," said Blake, "run to the north, toward the road and the hills, and if we're separated, which we're likely to be, make it to the camp at Rosalita."

A third fire-sling arose, from in front of the store. It struck close in front of the house and was jarred out by the impact with the ground. The fourth came sailing straight on the wind and it alighted where the soldiers could not see, but a yell from the raiders told them what had happened.

Two or three men ran outside to verify their fears. It lay square on the peak, and the thatch was already ablaze. The men got back inside.

When survivors were questioned afterward as to why they did not try to escape now before the ground was all lighted up like a sunny day their answers were inadequate. They guessed that they didn't think about it, or maybe they thought the fire wouldn't do much damage, seeing it was on a metal roof, and—well, they just didn't, that was all.

The fire and its effects developed with unbelievable swiftness. The surroundings, even the willows at the edge of the bosky, were lighted up at once. In a minute or two the twists of fiber that held the rock weights on began to burn through, letting the rocks slide down. They carried chunks of blazing weed so that soon fire was dripping like rain from the eaves.

The porch quickly caught fire and the flames roared past the door with the wind. Smoke blew in through the broken window-panes. A great lump of the thatch fell off under the window on the lee side of the house. Its fire was hot and fierce and shortly the window-frame was ablaze.

The smoke made the men cough. They expected every instant to be rushed. They craned out wherever they could see through the hot fog and kept up a random firing.

Embers dropped through the jagged holes in the roof that the bullets had torn and then got under the men's bare feet. Four men were without shoes. They were used to going barefooted around their camp, and they had forgotten to salvage their footwear, except that Blake had put his on. They were in their sleeveless undershirts, just as they had gone to their blankets, and the embers pricked and burned their shoulders.

Down past the store in the fringe of light a man appeared. He seemed to be trying to get others to follow him, for he was gesturing wildly. And he shouted like a madman. He put his hand to his mouth and the whistle shrilled, then other men ran up and tried to pull him back, but he did not go until he had emptied his pistol at the Americans.

The roof turned red inside, making the rooms unbearably hot. A rafter began to blaze. The men looked at one another and knew that it was time to go.

"See that your guns are loaded," said Blake. "See that every man has some extra cartridges. Somebody bring Hopegath's body."

"I will," said Showski, who was squat and strong.

"And somebody help Freed."

"I'll help myself!" Freed said. "Every man for himself."

"Let's go then."

They turned toward the kitchen together, expecting to leave by that door and circle around to the other side and cut across the shelf, which was the only way to the hills. But when the door was

hauled open it was seen to be as impossible as the other exits, for there was a stack of burning thatch against it. Burdened and crippled men could not go through that.

"Here, my window," said Epstein. "It's in the clear."

"Go to it," ordered Blake. "Run till you're in the dark."

Epstein forthwith straddled across the window-sill, was half out when there was the roar of a gun like a shotgun close up, and Epstein slumped and toppled out headforemost.

The others gave back. The front-room window away from the bosky was in flames, but it appeared to be the best way, the point least likely to be covered by the enemy close at hand. Blake jerked a side-bar from old Dorsey's cot, knocked the burning window-frame out, and reached out and shoved the blazing débris aside.

"Now," he said.

Burkee went first, then Perrin, running across the open lighted ground. The shotgun sounded again, but the two kept on. The squat Showski went next with Hopegath limply over his shoulder. The raiders yelled triumphantly when they beheld that spectacle. Lundy next, and he stopped outside and waited for Freed. Blake helped Freed through and he went hobbling in the wake of Lundy, using his gun for a cane.

Sergeant Blake waited until Freed was well away from the burning building, near a clothes-line post set in a pile of rocks. Then he stepped through the window and started, pistol in hand. Bullets were cracking all around. He saw raiders coming out from their concealment, saw them shooting, heard them yelling hoarsely.

A ragged Mexican with an upraised shotgun appeared before him. Blake's pistol hand jerked twice and the man went down. Blake shouted to Churchbutler and Callahan to run for it, and they answered that they were starting.

Then Blake remembered something. Old Dorsey! Where was he?

"The old fool," he said, and ran back into the house.

Dorsey's bedding was in flames. The floor was starting to burn in two or three places. The fires lighted the smoky rooms. A glance showed that Dorsey was not in the front room, and a glimpse served for the kitchen.

"Dorsey! Dorsey!" bellowed Blake, and he cursed violently.

He could not stay to look farther. His clothing was almost on fire, his bare arms were blistering. He got through the window again and ran.

Freed was having a hard time of it on ahead, limping along with his rifle for a staff. Blake could hear him bawling to Lundy to go on, but Lundy ran back and supported him, pulling him along.

When Sergeant Blake reached the pile of rock around the clothes-line post he dropped down and opened fire on three or four men closing in on him from as many directions. He meant to cover the retreat of his men.

SOME time after daybreak Churchbutler and Callahan climbed up out of the bosky to the road some little distance from the store and met Lundy coming down from the rocky hill nearly a quarter of a mile from the burned house. Lundy carried his rifle clumsily across his forearms. His hands were blistered and swollen, and one sleeve was burned from his shirt, its absence exposing a long red welt.

"Where's the rest?" asked Churchbutler.

Lundy jerked his head toward the boulder-strewn hill behind him.

"Some of them are coming," he said. "Perrin and Showski are burned. Freed's got some bum legs. How'd you guys come out so neat? You look like you'd just been holy-stoned. You aren't scratched."

"We had a tight little fort there in the rocks," said Churchbutler.

"Where's the rest of the outfit?" asked Callahan.

"Haven't seen any rest. Where's the raiders?"

"Pulled out like an army was after them. We sat up there and watched and then followed them."

"Up where?" asked Lundy impatiently. "Where'd they pull out to? Can't one o' you guys roll me a smoke?"

"It's like this," said Churchbutler, getting out tobacco. "When Sergeant Blake hollered for us to beat it we slipped down through the horse-trap and along this road. Nobody interfered. We didn't see a soul. So we went on quite a little ways. The shooting broke off and we stopped. The fire went out pretty soon, and then it begins to get light. We saw the Mexicans gathering down on the other side of the bosky below us. Their horses were gone. They were left afoot. And they didn't lose any time hitting for the Rio."

"Like an army was on their heels," Callahan repeated. "Here's a match."

"We went down where they had been," continued Churchbutler. "Nobody there. We took a look-see. Two pools of blood. Horse tracks. Some new clothes-pins scattered around, some boxes of soda and a mouse-trap. We followed in after the mob. Horse tracks had come up and gone back again.

"We sneaked through the brush and saw them burying their unlucky ones on the river bank. Or some of them worked at it and some waded and swam the river. Then pretty soon all got across and went on out of sight. We took a sneak down to the bank. Seven graves in the sand."

"Something in them too," broke in Callahan. "We kicked the sand away in two or three till we saw bodies. Shallow. I'll bet Churchy and I got four of 'em. I just about know we did."

"The horses had gone back," added Churchy. "You could see the tracks going down into the water. I'll bet the horse-holders are trying to run away with all the loot, and that's why this big gang was in such a hurry to catch up."

Callahan had another word.

"They carried three or four wounded across with them," he said.

"There they come," said Lundy, pointing.

Perrin and Showski were hobbling along over the rough rocks with Freed between them. Showski was barefooted and in his sleeveless undershirt. Churchy, Cal and Lundy started along the road to join them and had not gone far when they came upon the body of Burkee beside the road—little Burkee of the girlish voice, with empty cartridges scattered around him, his finger still upon the trigger of his rifle and two of the raiders stark and stiff not ten feet away.

A little farther along the six soldiers came together. It was to be seen now that Perrin was burned severely. Half of one breeches leg had been cut out, exposing an irregular, ugly burn. Seeing that it was attracting attention, he explained.

"A red-hot coal fell down my shirt collar," he said. "I jumped away from my clo'es and it dropped to my knee. I cut it out."

His hands were burned also.

"Where's Blake and old Dorsey?" he asked.

Nobody knew. They kept on toward the ruins of the burned house, but Churchy, Cal and Lundy got ahead, and they were the first to make the next discovery.

Sergeant Blake lay by the pile of rocks that supported the clothes-line post. A scattering of used cartridges was around him. Up the hill a little was the body of a Mexican. Another lay near the corner of the blackened house with a shotgun under him. And a third lay almost within arm's length of Blake—a big and shaggy man with a bright whistle on a chain around his neck and six or seven bullet wounds in his body.

"It looks like he might have been the leader," said Callahan. "Wonder why they didn't pack his carcass off?"

"Maybe they got wind that the horse-holders had skipped with the loot," surmised Churchy, "and they didn't have time to bother."

The other three had come up, and they

all meandered on. There was a smell of fire and smoke in the air. They found Epstein behind the house. Like Hopegath, he never knew what hit him. They did not find Dorsey, but they found a dozen pools and splotches of blood along the bosky's edge.

The six men gathered at the store. For a while they were silent. Then they began to discuss a course of procedure. Perrin said he supposed he was in charge, but he soon showed that he did not know what to do, so Lundy and Churchbutler took hold. They agreed that Churchy and Cal should go on foot to Rosalita Springs, get horses and hurry to the telephone eighteen miles farther and get a report to regimental headquarters, including a request for medical aid.

Quite some time went by in the discussion, and in covering the bodies with blankets, and in drinking, and bathing their burns at a faucet on the end of a pipe that ran down to the store from a spring up on the hillside, so that it was full morning and the sun was reddening the hills when at last Cal and Churchy shouldered their rifles and started away from the store. But they had not taken ten steps when they halted to stare at a curious sight coming into view along the road.

It was horses, drooping, bony beasts, looking as if they were hardly able to walk, with stuffed and shapeless sacks hanging across or behind the saddles. And old Hennepin Dorsey up in a saddle was turning the string along the road toward the store. When he got the weary animals headed properly he put himself ahead of them and they came following after.

The soldiers sat on the edge of the porch and waited. They saw that old Dorsey's face was long and weary and his shoulders sagged. When he stopped in front of them he put a query as if he were afraid of it.

"How'd it come out?"

"Four of us gone west," said Lundy. "Blake included."

Hennepin Dorsey considered this—or waited until his voice steadied; then—

"Reckon it's on my hands," he said, "sendin' that note."

"No, no, Mr. Dorsey," said Churchy, regarding the tired old face.

"No, certainly not so," declared Lundy. "That Mexican was coming on to tell us anyhow. He said so. It would have been the same if you hadn't sent the note."

"Yeah, yeah," Dorsey agreed, as blank as if he hadn't heard a word.

This encouraged Callahan to nudge Lundy in the ribs with his elbow and say in an aside—

"You're a liar."

"No," protested Lundy. "I betcha he'd have come on and told us."

Old Dorsey brightened a little and seemed to take heart.

"Yeah," he said, "I expect Lundy's right. "Well—"

He turned in his saddle to regard the string of horses and the lumpy sacks. In the rear of the string five horsemen came into view. When the horsemen drew nearer the soldiers saw that four rode ahead like captives and that the fifth one, riding behind, carried a gun across his saddle and rode an Army horse.

"Say," exclaimed Perrin, standing up suddenly, "there's my prisoner. And the horse he got away with. And he's got Dorsey's old short gun."

"Yeah," said Dorsey, "I run across him when I snuck away from the house and got through the circle. He was looking for me. Him and me killed two of the horse-holders and taken these four captive. There was six altogether. But one would of been enough to hold the horses. We couldn't hardly make 'em move.

"One of the captives speaks a little Americano and he interpreted for us. He says, Paul Revere, that he is fond of me because I played him some music and he's going to work for me. I dunno. Anyhow he came back to help me out. We got together on it and drove the gang o' horses back to the river and into the water to make the raiders think the

horse-holders had run away to Mexico with the loot. We waded up the river a mile, and circled back, and here we are."

Dorsey got down stiffly.

"That old Mexican saddle's hard," he said. "But there's my store in those sacks, intac'. We'll have some breakfast."

He dragged a fat sack from the nearest saddle, laid it on the store porch, and pulled out a big cheese from which only a small wedge had been cut, a slab of bacon, some boxes of crackers and a can of coffee.

"Got some stuff together handy for comp'ny's breakfast," he said.

"All I want," said Churchy as he cut off a three or four pound chunk of cheese, "is that Army horse Paul Revere's riding. I'll make him hammer the road to Rosalita."

Munching on the cheese, he strode off to take possession of the horse.

Dorsey and Callahan busied themselves. The latter gathered scraps of paper and boxes that the raiders had scattered around and started a fire. The other men looked on. Old Dorsey, having found an empty pail in the wreckage of the store, came with it full of water from the adjacent faucet. He set it down and began to shake coffee into it.

"Cawffee, ever'body?" he asked plaintively.

"Cawffee," they all answered.

"And make it strong as lye," said Freed of the crudely wrapped legs.

"I'm right sorry," said Hennepin Dorsey with just the faintest hint of a tremor in his voice, "that the others ain't here to eat breakfast with us. Sergeant Blake, now—"

"Blake," said Lundy, "was in the service twenty-one years. He fought in a war or two. He was living on borrowed time. You quit griefing about him."

"Umm—I believe," said Dorsey absently, thinking aloud as he still shook coffee into the pail of water, "that I'll make myself two cups this morning—strong as lye—strong as lye."

Hunting with the Nomads of Northern Patagonia

By

EDGAR YOUNG

THE arc of light expands above the eastern horizon and gray dawn breaks upon the rugged pampa. There is frost bristling on the blades of coarse bunch-grass and the never-resting south wind sweeps over the table-topped hills and moans among the gulches and shelving-walled cañons and cañadones. Dogs are yapping among the cluster of ochre-dyed gua naco-skin lodges that sprawl beside an ice-covered stream.

A tall man comes out of one of the open-front lodges that face eastward and begins to chant. He is the chief and is giving the morning peroration and the orders of the day. He is eighty years old and his tawny, seamed face contrasts strangely with his snow-white hair. He is so erect he does not appear over sixty. As his bass guttural booms forth, drowsy squaws slip out and punch up the embers, and the fires at the mouths of the tents burst into flames. Young bucks yawn and wander away to round up the horses. On and on orates the chief. He finishes by giving an account of his own ancient prowess in the chase when men were men and chased guanacos and ostriches afoot. Little heed is paid to him. It is the usual morning affair. They have heard it all hundreds of times before. The camp becomes astir with life. There is no breakfast cooked. It is, in fact, running wild at the moment on the pampas.

The men return with the horses. The squaws are pulling the skin coverings from the *kaus*, or *toldos*, and bundling up the poles. Two bucks throw their hulls upon half-tamed mustangs and gallop away along the sides of an imaginary triangle in the direction mentioned by the *casique*, now and again leaping off to light a bush or pile of dried nettles. Another rider follows each of them at an interval and then others and others, until all the men are galloping in two diverging lines, the women and children and slow-moving pack-animals bringing up the base. The dogs, now almost useless since the Indians have horses, race behind the riders with lolling tongues. All but a few are desexed.

The fires* are used because animals run from the sight and smell of smoke and these fires serve in the place of several men in holding the line so that nothing will escape from the big net that is first thrown. Their additional use is to show the course of the pointsmen so that the other riders can follow it. The country is exceedingly rough and broken and the riding is done pellmell up and down slopes and over bluffs that appear impossible to a man on horseback. These men are exceedingly fine horsemen and absolutely

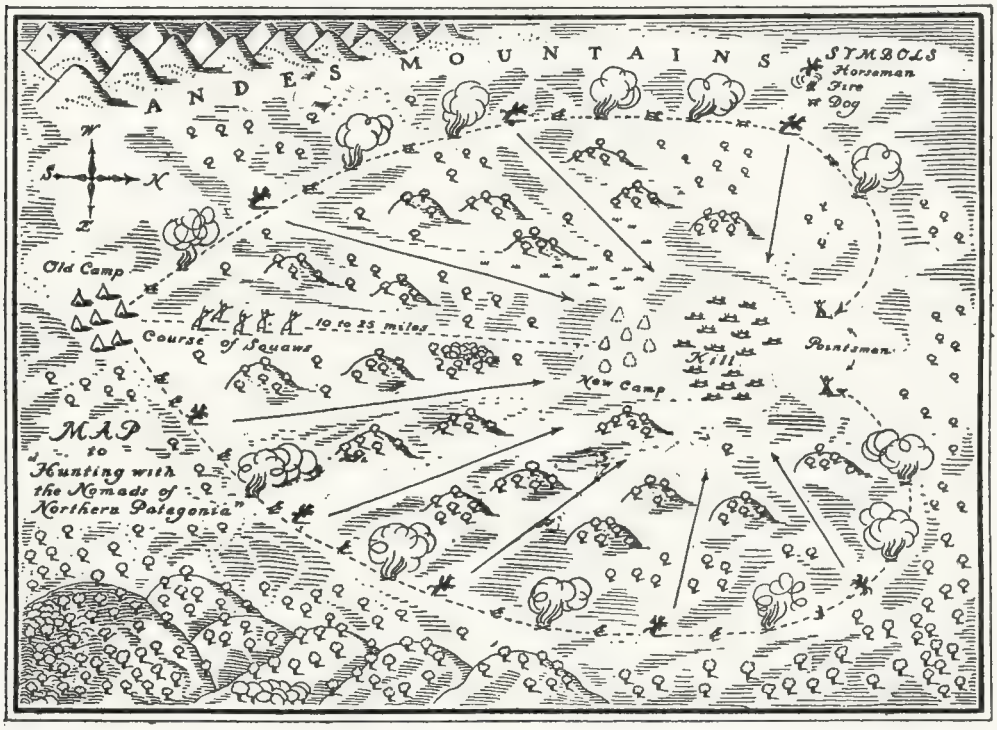
*The Spaniards gave the name "Fireland" (Tierra del Fuego) to all of this country on account of the fires used by the Indians in hunting. The name is now borne only by the large island to the south of Magellan Straits. The method I have described is the one used today.

without fear of any stunt that is barely possible. Many horses are killed and injured but each man has a number of spares in charge of the squaws.

Two hours pass and game is being gathered into the racing net. Long-necked guanacos neigh and dash hither and yon within the enclosure and dart back from the galloping horses and smoke of the fires. Ostriches run crazily with short wings beating the air. A mighty shouting goes up as the pointsmen turn and bring the ends of the crescent together. The circle closes in on all sides. Bolas are swinging around heads of galloping men and whiz with a peculiar thrumming sound as they soar through the air. Few misses are registered. The necks of guanacos and ostriches are aimed for. A wild bull is thrown by the ball-weighted thongs winding about his hind feet.

An Indian swinging a lariat rides after a puma and it runs with great bounds at tremendous speed for a short distance and turns snarling under a bush. Riding close, the Tehuelche ropes it around the neck. It begins to spit as he drags it forth. He slays it with a single ball tied to a thong, crushing its skull with one blow. Men spring off their horses and break the necks of floundering rheas by grasping the neck and twisting the head with one hand. Guanacos are dispatched with a bola or a stone held in the hand.

The squaws immediately set to work pitching the camp beside a spring. A row of stakes three feet high and with



forks at the top is driven and a ridgepole laid in the forks. Another row six feet high is driven a few yards ahead of this and farther ahead another row nine feet high. After the ridgepoles have been placed, the cover, consisting of forty or fifty skins sewn together with sinews, is drawn over from the rear and lashed with thongs to the front posts. At the mouth of each shelter a fire is kindled. The men skin and clean the guanacos and pumas where they have fallen. A portion of the

offal is given to the dogs. The ostriches are plucked, the wing feathers being tied in a bundle with a thong and saved for trading.

The game is dragged to the camp and the squaws spit haunches and ribs on a rod or stake leaning over the fire on the windward side. A huge earthen pot is set on the embers and hunks of puma meat thrown in to boil. The Gaucho likes his puma barbacued but the Tehuelches like theirs stewed. Stewed puma resembles boiled pork. Ostrich eggs are set on end in the ashes to roast. Twenty to forty of these are found in the nests with the male bird sitting on them. No discrimination is made between absolutely fresh eggs and those in all stages up to the about-to-be-hatched chick. Fat of all sorts is distributed and eaten raw. Blood that has been scrupulously saved from all the game is mixed with a little crude salt and eagerly devoured.

An ostrich is being prepared for the fire. It is cut in half just below the breast bone and the backbone extracted from the lower half but left in the upper. The legs are split and the bone extracted so as to get at the marrow and save the sinews for plaiting thongs. Part of the meat from the legs is sliced off and placed in the breast portion and the wings of this part turned inward. Hot stones are inserted. Then both halves are tied up like a sack with skin from the legs, a portion of it having been left for the purpose on the breast half. A bed of coals is raked out. The two huge roasts are set upon the red embers. A tantalizing smell begins to arise. They are carefully watched and turned. When the roasts are almost done a light blaze is kindled around them to brown them. They are then taken off the fire, the top cut off with a knife, the stones extracted and the party begins to eat. Long hunks are cut off, the end flopped into the gravy that has gathered in the bottom of the cavity, then into the mouth and lopped off just beyond the lips with an upward flick of the knife, *à la gaucho*.

The meat of wild cattle is roasted with the skin on. Guanacos are skinned. Hides of mature ones form the *toldo* coverings when sewed together and painted on the skin side with ochre mixed with ostrich fat. The skins of unborn ones and young ones up to two months old are used for the robe worn by men and women. After guanacos become two months of age they become woolly and their skins become unfit for this purpose.

The Tehuelches also know how to *charquear* or jerk meat. Strips are cut and hung across poles until black and dry. Thus preserved, the meat may be kept for long periods without spoiling. This is also roasted and pounded into pemmican which is mixed with ostrich grease and stored in pots. *Chasquis*, or messengers, making long trips eat of this at intervals.

The nomads move every day, the distance depending on how long it takes to round up game enough.

More of

CLEMENTS RIPLEY'S

SERIAL OF THE SEA POACHERS

Smoky Seas

A NEW life began for Peter Chadwick on the day when he found himself stranded in Yokohama. He had been accustomed to having his own way, to a life of extravagant luxury. Now his services were sold by cockney Billiter, who had found him in the gutter, to Morgan Hawke, captain of the sealer *Bering* for three Mexican dollars. He was rechristened "Pete" and given a berth as cook's helper and cabin-boy—the meanest job on the ship.

Chadwick did not fit too easily into his new rôle. He had two fights with Maartens, the slovenly bullying mate. Then a man was disabled, and Pete was assigned a place in a boat to row the hunters out after the seals.

The *Bering* was approaching the forbidden Russian waters when one day they sighted a beautiful schooner.

"T'at's t'e *Kamloops*," said little Oscaar Tallgren.

"Ain't she a honey for a —— lime-juicin' stool-pigeon like Billiter to have?" asked another man.

And Chadwick realized that he had not seen the last of the man who had sold him to Morgan Hawke.

CHAPTER IX

THE MATE

THE *Kamloops* passed out of sight, and the incident out of Chadwick's mind for the time being. He had other things to think about—notably the mate, Maartens.

He was ready for him now, and itching for the chance to get at him again. And now it was he who was forcing the quarrel. There was a studied contempt in his manner toward him that, while it never definitely went beyond the limits set by discipline, was obvious to any one who cared to notice.

The mate, on the other hand, was

cautious. His policy was also evident—to catch Chadwick in some flagrant insolence or slackness that would give him an excuse for whatever he did and gain him the unqualified backing of the skipper. But Chadwick did his work seamanly and well, and there was no chance for any complaint.

Both of them were very much on edge these days.

There was a morning when the sky and sea were a rare even blue with a brisk little breeze blowing when Oscaar, hooking the forward tackle into the bow of the sealing-boat preparatory to lowering, paused to jerk his head toward the poop and whisper—

"Luk at t'e Ol' Man!"

Chadwick glanced aft. The skipper was not in his usual place this morning, balancing on his heels and toes beside the wheel. Instead, he was pacing back and forth the narrow width of the deck. His eyes, usually so keenly fixed on the work forward, were sweeping the horizon.

Men who remained cooped up on a ship for weeks at a time seeing no one but one another become curiously sensitive to impressions. Chadwick had a feeling that something was impending. There was a quick decisiveness in the way the skipper's feet hit the deck and a strained crease between his eyes that made him a little uneasy. It seemed to him that the others felt it too.

"He iss eating hees seegar," Oscaar whispered again. "Luk— Ay bet yu we getting in t'ose Rossia water."

He voiced his opinion to Swift after the schooner had dropped them astern in the sealing-boat. The latter was scornful until, as they watched, a small dark figure trotted up the main rigging and stayed there, minute after minute, silhouetted against the sky.

"By ——, you're right this time, Squarehead," he admitted wonderingly. "There goes the mate with the glasses! But I'd like to know how in —— you knew."

"Maybe Ay am hearing t'e skipper say so," the little Norwegian suggested innocently.

"G'wan! Think I believe he's gonna put a Swede boat-steerer wise when he don't even tell the hunters? Why I'll bet the mate even didn't know it 'til he sent him up aloft to look out for cruisers. Tell me another one."

Obligingly, Oscaar did.

"Maybe iss because Ay am born wit' a caul. Ay got second-sight."

"Like —— you have! D'you believe that, Pete?"

Chadwick grinned and shook his head.

" 'Course not," Swift went on scornfully. "That's a bunch o' blah. Luck signs, now, they're different, like goin' to sea with a nigger girl on board. I wouldn't sail in no ship that carried one myself, nor I wouldn't go out in nothing that had a blue mourning stripe 'round it. Stands to reason them signs are right because how would folks know about 'em if they hadn't been proved? I'll believe what's been proved an' nothin' else."

"You're an agnostic," Chadwick suggested with amusement.

"Ag—which? Come again, fella. Oh, sure—agnostic. Well, that's a hard soundin' word, but it means me if it means what I was sayin' just now. When a ship goes to sea with a nigger girl or a blue mournin' stripe an' it sinks, that proves it, don't it?"

"Suppose it doesn't sink?"

"Then it's pure bull luck, an' a —— sight more'n the crew deserves for takin' a chance like that. But this second-sight stuff—that's blah!" He turned back to the little boat-steerer curiously. "Go on, no kiddin'! How did you know?"

"Ay seen t'e skipper," Oscaar said. "He wass eating hees seegar—like t'at. T'en Ay know."

The imitation was perfect. Chadwick laughed and Swift gave a surprized whistle.

"Well I'll be ——ed. You Scowegians beat ——. Now who'd ha' noticed that? I never did."

"Maybe," Oscaar said slily, "rich honter

like yu iss got too many t'ings t'ink about. Yu t'inkin' 'bout t'ose Japanese girl in Yokohama maybe, all kinds o' t'ing. Me, Ay am yust poor sailorman, got not'ing t'ink about. So Ay am seeing skipper eat hees seegar an' Ay know."

The little man was not the only one who knew. By the time the mate had been aloft half an hour, the crossing over the dead-line into Russian waters had been discussed and rediscussed from a dozen different angles in every boat of the five. And skinning-time that night found the whole ship tense and jumpy.

Chadwick, who found a few minutes to drop into the galley for a yarn with 'Goost, a custom he had fallen into since his removal forward, heard the tale from Saarenpa of how Preacher had ventured a protest to the skipper at supper.

"Oldt Man, he say, 'Dot'sa my sheep,' he say. 'Bai ——, ay'm gon' ron dot sheep. An' ay'm gon follow dot herd clear in da middle Colorado if she'sa gon' dere. An' if yu don' like it yu can get oudt an' walk.' Dot'sa what he say."

Chadwick felt the strain more than most perhaps, and yet there was a certain excitement about it that keyed him up beyond anything he had ever felt. There was a thrill connected with the idea of slipping in and raiding the preserves of a great power and slipping out again that took hold of his imagination and made him tingle all over. It was only by an effort that he forced himself to concentrate on the injustice of being forced to risk the salt-mines—he had heard a good deal about these from his mates in the forecastle—at the will of one man.

That phase of the matter seemed to leave the crew cold. It was all in the day's work and Preacher's protest was a five minutes' wonder. No one expressed any surprize at the skipper's attitude, but a good many seemed amazed that he hadn't "busted him one in the jaw."

"But, good lord, you know we'll get the salt-mines as quick as he will if we're caught," Chadwick insisted. "A Russian court won't make any difference between the skipper and us."

"Ah, well, ye can't blame them for that," O'Connor remarked philosophically. "Sure don't I remember how the squire would be feeling about his hares an' me a lad in the Old Country. 'Twas tip yer hat an', 'Good mornin' to yer Honor,' wan day, an', 'O'Connor, ye —— poachin' scoundrel, let me catch ye in my covers again an' I'll put a charge o' shot in ye,' the next, when like as not 'twas another lad done it entirely. But sure I bore him no ill-will. A fine old gintleman he was, an' many's the bit o' fun I've had wit' his keepers an' it the dark o' the moon."

"But, good lord, I'm not blaming the Russians," Chadwick argued, exasperated and amused. "I'm blaming the skipper."

"Ah, sure, haven't we our lay in the catch, an' we wishful for a big pay-day? An' if it wasn't for somebody touchin' them up a time or two the Roosians 'ud get so slack there'd be no preservin' at all an' there'd be such a power o' skins took the market 'ud go to ——," the Irishman countered with ready sophistry. "An' then where would we be an' what would a man do for a job? No, begad," he finished virtuously, "I'm fer anything that makes strict preservin'. 'Tis the pillar o' the industry."

He paused triumphantly and a mutter ran around the bunks. "Sure it is." "That's right—low market makes a slim pay-day." "Ay bet yu—" While heads nodded sagely in the half darkness.

Chadwick shrugged and gave it up. As a matter of fact it was only the idea of being forced into poaching by some one else that roused a stubborn devil of opposition in him. The thing itself rather appealed to him.

A moment later he was called with Oscaar, Johnson, Pawlet and Peterson, to the watch on deck.

The night was clear and almost still with just enough breeze blowing to keep way on the schooner. Pawlet relieved Spinelli at the wheel and the other four went forward to the forecastle head. Chadwick was told off as lookout.

"And keep your eyes skinned if you

don't want trouble," the mate bawled after him.

He took his station in the fore-rigging. The others lay down on the forecastle head. For a little he heard the drowsy hum of their voices, then a yawn and after that silence. It was the custom of the *Bering* to let the watch sleep within call, except for the officer, the man at the wheel and the lookout.

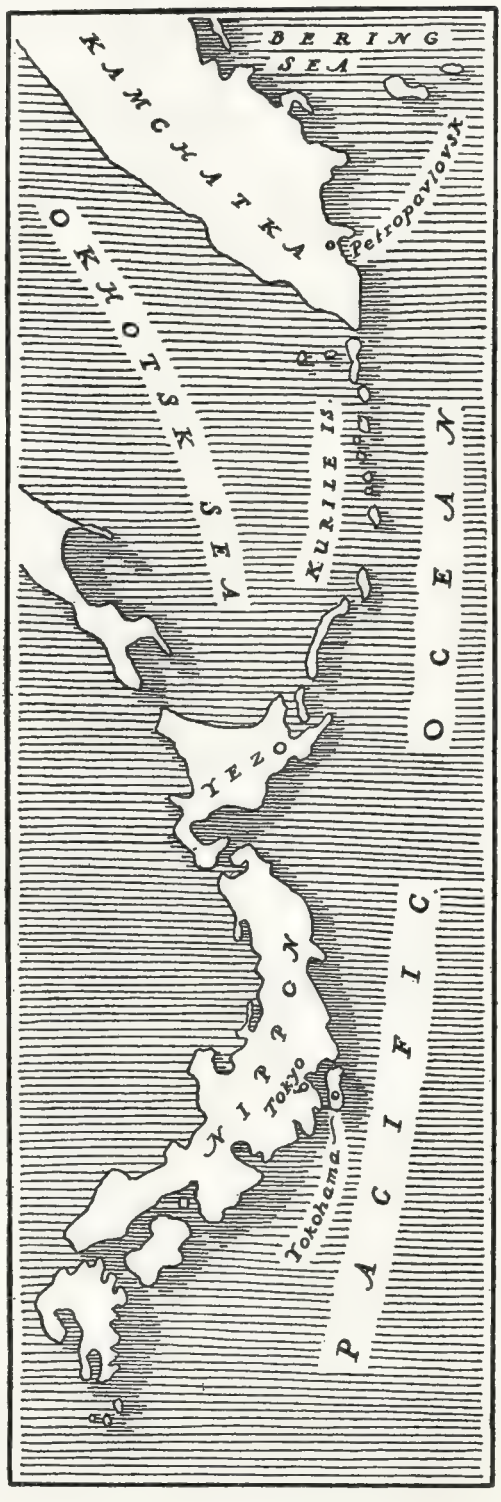
Chadwick stared through the star-lit dark with the wind on his face and thought, with the steady churn and gurgle of the forefoot for accompaniment.

He had been eight weeks at sea now; eight weeks of bending his will to that of another man, eight weeks of grinding work and living conditions to which he would not have subjected his prize-winning bird dogs, in the far-off days when he had such things. And curiously enough he hadn't been unhappy.

He missed the other things of course. It had taken his body some time to accustom itself to the change and his mind even longer. He stretched out his hand and looked at it whimsically in the starlight—nails broken and rimmed with black, the skin cracked and grimed, and the blisters that had hardened into callouses. Baths and beds and clean clothes and a certain amount of privacy—a man missed things like that of course. But he wasn't unhappy.

He wondered how he would like changing it all for an office—sitting all day at a desk! The thought made him a little uncomfortable. But that was absurd, of course. An office was the place to make money these days. He didn't want to be a foremast hand all his life, but it had been a good experience. And he had made good too—been promoted, although of course that was an accident. But even so Swift said he was one of the best boat-pullers he had ever seen—lucky, too.

He wondered a little whether it might not be worth while to ship again. A good crowd, the *Bering's* lot. There was no particular hurry about going into an office. Another year wouldn't make so much difference. He let his mind run a



bit. Might be able to get a berth as mate. He knew a little navigation. He had worked it up for the fun of the thing on the yacht. You never knew what might come useful. He saw himself as mate, then as captain. Captain at thirty, say. Why, that beat an office! A captain was somebody, and if he saved his pay and bought into the ship—

Lulled by the churn of the forefoot he went off into a sort of waking dream. He sold his interest when freights were high, and bought in again when they were low. He owned his ship now, and part of another. He established a line of trans-Pacific freighters, no —— brass-bound passenger service, all *suji* and hat-tipping, but freighters.

"Ram 'em through —— or high water, and if you can't do it I'll get somebody who can. I know this business, Mister! I started as a cabin boy—"

At this point a bellow from the poop jerked him back into reality.

"Hey, you!"

He came to with a start and an irritated shrug. That heavy-handed "Hey, you!" had become Maartens' form of address to him. It pleased him to pretend that he either couldn't remember his name or wouldn't bother to. It was just one of the thousand little tricks of the mate that had rasped Chadwick before now.

Instead of answering he slipped back and jogged Oscaar with his foot. The little man opened his eyes without stirring and whispered—

"What iss it?"

"Keep awake and keep quiet. You'll be a witness I'm not asleep."

He slipped back and took his place in the fore-rigging.

"Hey, you!" It was louder this time, and wrathful. "You there —— you!"

"Better yu answer," came Oscaar's troubled whisper.

There was no answer. Chadwick sat in the fore-rigging with his head a little bowed. He might have been thinking, or asleep.

Presently the mate came forward, walking softly. He crossed the forecastle head cat-footed, stepping over the bodies of the three prostrate men. And just as he opened his mouth for the yell that should bring the startled sleeper up all standing Chadwick turned his head and regarded him with a look of mild inquiry.

It had been his purpose merely to make Maartens ridiculous in the eyes of the watch, but he had done better than he knew. The mate had spent a weary day aloft with the glasses. Like every one else on board his nerves were on edge at the thought of Russian cruisers, and his mood was savage.

He started back and ripped out a string of profanity.

"And the next time I call you, you sing out or you'll catch ——," he finished hoarsely.

"Were you calling me, sir?" Chadwick's tone was deceptively humble.

"Who the —— d'you think I was calling? Heard me, didn't you? Unless you were asleep!"

"I heard you, sir, but you didn't mention any names and I thought you might be talking to the man at the wheel."

There was a snicker from the forecastle head. All three were awake now and listening.

"Shut up," the mate snarled savagely. "Yes, like —— you heard me. You were asleep, by ——."

The three sailors stirred uneasily. It is no light matter to be caught asleep on lookout nor to accuse a man of it.

Chadwick said steadily:

"I was not asleep, sir. Oscaar can tell you—"

"By ——, don't you lie to me," Maartens roared. "You or Oscaar either—"

Chadwick said nothing, but he came up suddenly out of the fore-rigging and his first swift rush, with both hands hitting, carried the big mate back across the forecastle head to the deck. Then they were just aft of the foremast, slugging toe to toe. The smack and thud of blows on flesh, a straining cough, an oath from the mate smashed back into his mouth and ending with a grunt—

Chadwick's head swam. The blood from a cut over his eye blinded him. Smells of blood and sweating flesh. He clinched and hung on, wiping his face against Maartens' shoulder.

"I told you—look out for yourself. Now—going to kill you—"

The mate struggled heavily to free himself.

"Johnson!—Peterson!"

"Shut up, you yellow dog!" Chadwick breathed savagely. "This is between you and me—sir."

He threw himself off at the last word and smashed right and left to the mouth. There was no sparring this time, no standing off and dancing in to cut him up. This was fighting and he drove in joyously as the mate gave ground, glancing from side to side for a weapon.

"Peterson—Johnson! Get him—"

Chadwick heard Oscaar's voice, high-pitched and gentle—

"Better yu keepin' out, Yonson. Ay skal cut yu—"

He had a glimpse of Pawlet in the starlight, bent over the wheel, his broad, simple face twisted in a snarl. He drove his fist into the mate's stomach, saw him stagger back, sprang in to finish him.

The yell of warning came too late. He heard a sharp hiss of indrawn breath.

Chadwick's education had not included that lashing kick or the need of a guard for it. He reeled against the rail, fighting for breath, sick, while the stars danced and whirled and his head and eyes seemed to swell. Sheer exquisite pain flowed over him in waves. The mate gesticulating on the poop was a purple blur.

He let go the rail and lurched forward. The mate stopped shouting and put out his hands and backed away.

"Keep off now. I don't want to have to hurt you. Keep off, I tell you."

Things stopped whirling. The stars stood still. A great silence fell. Chadwick dragged himself up the three steps at the break of the poop. One step. Two steps. Three steps. Still—everything was still. The stars and the ship and the four men of the watch, all standing still to watch him climb three steps. The mate was shouting:

"Keep him off, keep him off, somebody! He's crazy!"

Funny how he looked with his hands out and his mouth open, backing away. Pawlet with all his teeth showing—so many teeth—everything standing still to watch while he went forward and the mate backed away with his hands out.

The mate kept backing. He backed into the low rail, tottered, threw up his hands in a futile clutch at nothing and went overboard without a sound.

For an instant Chadwick stood there, staring dully at the spot where he had been. Then somebody shouted:

"Man overboard. Man overboard!"

That brought him to his senses.

Things snapped back into their proper proportions. He sprang for the wheel.

"Over—put her hard over. What the —— is the matter with you? The mate's overboard!"

Pawlet was rigid. His eyes were on the binnacle. He said, "I never liked him," in a queer, throaty whisper.

Chadwick swept him aside with a backhanded cuff and spun the spokes. Then he kicked off his shoes and dived over the rail.

The shock of the ice-cold water made him gasp and cleared his head. He shouted, "Maartens! Hey, Maartens," and thought, "Why doesn't the fool sing out?"

"Hey—Maartens! Sing out, can't you?"

Then lights flared aboard the schooner. There was a clatter of feet, bawled orders. He saw something floating a little way away and swam toward it. Hard work. He was more tired from the fight than he had realized. It was a long way, and the water was icy, numbing.

"Hey—Maartens!"

His voice was thin and lost in the dark. He swam endlessly, although he knew it was no more than a few yards. He reached out, gripped something alive.

"T'at iss me yu got. Ay got t'e mate."

'Oscaar!" He was treading water now, his teeth rattling like a telegraph instrument. "Y-you came after the mate?"

"Ay bet yu. Sometime—killing t'at feller, 'nother notch on may knife. Get nine, find million dollar—"

In spite of his numbness and weariness Chadwick laughed hysterically. Going to save a man to kill him, save him to kill him, save him to— Here, this wouldn't do! Snap out of it! He said:

"You're all in. Let me—"

"T'anks— Ay'm aw-right."

The lights of the schooner were very far away. Chadwick trod water endlessly. He tried to listen to what Oscar was saying.

Then there was a creaking of rowlocks a voice said, "Why'n —— don't you holler?" peevishly, as if it were a personal grievance. He tried to shout.

Later he lay on the deck of the *Bering* and men walked back and forth across him and talked in thin-drawn, far-away voices about some one who was dead.

"Sure he's dead—lookit his face."

"Dead, ——! Didn't I see his fingers move."

"If we'd a bit of a barrel now, the way we'd be rollin' him—"

"G'wan, Irish— Ya crazy!" Then the skipper, clean-cut, decisive:

"He's dead. Couldn't swim a stroke. He must have drowned while Oscaar was holding him." Chadwick knew then that they were talking about the mate and not about himself, and he sat up.

Oscaar was sitting a few feet away, against the galley. He said—

"Ain' t'at stinkin'?"

The investigation was brief and to the point. Captain Hawke called the members of the watch. Chadwick and Oscaar got up and joined them. A man was sent to the wheel to relieve Pawlet.

Hawke glanced from one to another, balancing on his heels and toes, and regarding them narrowly, while the five eyed him apprehensively and the others gathered a little way away in a curious group.

"You had the wheel?"

He shot the question at Pawlet so suddenly that the boy dodged as if it had been a blow.

"Yes, sir. That is, I—yes, sir."

"Humph! How'd the mate come to go overboard?"

"He fell over, sir. He—he backed into the rail, some way—"

"Hm! In a flat calm." He shot an inquiring glance at the others, who nodded in turn. Their faces were blank. Chadwick half opened his mouth to say something and then shut it again.

The skipper turned to Oscaar.

"You didn't like the mate!"

The crew stirred uneasily. Oscaar said—

"No, sir."

"You'd threatened him."

"No, sir," stolidly.

Chadwick took a half step forward.

"Oscaar didn't have anything to do with it, sir. I was—"

"Stow that! When I want you to talk I'll say so. Stow it, I said!" for Chadwick had tried to go on. "I'll do the talking here. Understand?" He eyed Chadwick's battered face thoughtfully. Then he turned.

"Saarenpa!"

"Aye, aye, sir."

The little Finn stepped forward. The skipper picked up his hand, examined it, felt the bones and dropped it again.

"It'll do. You can get back to the boat again. Take Pete's place. Oscaar can do the pulling for a while and you handle the oar. Take your stuff for'rd, Saarenpa."

Saarenpa stepped back with a hasty, "Aye, aye, sir," glad to be out of the lime-light.

Hawke eyed Chadwick appraisingly, while he stood there wondering what was coming.

"The rest of you can go. I've found out what I wanted to know," he said briefly. "Pete!"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"You're mate from now on."

If the calm, thick-set man in front of

him had knocked him down Chadwick would not have been particularly surprized. But this—

"You mean me, sir?"

"I said you. Know anything about navigation?"

"A little, sir." Chadwick was still too astonished to do anything but stare.

"Hm! Well, you got something out of having a yacht at any rate. Go get some dry clothes on and finish up the watch. Oh, yes, and have one of the men sew up the body. You'll find some old canvas in the sail locker. Good night, Mr. Chadwick."

"Good night, sir. And — and thank you, sir."

He was still utterly dazed. Not the least of his emotions was a curious wonder that Peter Chadwick IV could be made so completely happy by attaining a berth as mate of an eighty-ton sealing schooner.

It seemed to occur to Morgan Hawke, too, for there was an amused glint in his eyes as he turned away.

"Coming on, aren't you?" he said. "Hm! We'll make a Chadwick of you yet."

Chadwick wondered vaguely what the skipper meant by that.

Hawke went below. One or two of the hunters nodded in recognition of Chadwick's new dignity as they followed the example. The crew eyed him, awkward but friendly, shuffling their feet, until he sent them forward. Pawlet stopped to wring his hand with an enthusiasm that he was beyond putting into words, and Oscaar to grin shyly and say, "T'at's nice," adding a tardily remembered, "sir," that made them both laugh self-consciously.

'Goost nodded sagely.

"Always I say you are catching on good—yes. But now it ain't proper you should come by the galley no more. And that is not so good, sir."

No one noticed or mentioned the dead man who dripped saltily on the after hatch cover and waited for his canvas shroud.

CHAPTER X

ALARM

THEY buried him at dawn. Nothing had been said about getting it over as early as possible, but when the skipper came on deck before the sun was well over the horizon he found all hands waiting, as if drawn by a sort of telepathy.

Caps came off. Hawke read the service, slurring nothing, hurrying nothing, but with a queer impersonality that made it somehow meaningless. Six men tilted the hatch cover, and the body slid into the sea.

Caps went on. Pullers and boat-steerers jumped to their work. Hunters ran below for their guns and ammunition. The thing was over, the incident was closed, and the day's work was beginning.

Chadwick, at the wheel, thought—

"I suppose in a way I'm responsible for his death."

He felt as if he should be conscience-stricken, but strangely he found that he cared very little.

Other things were troubling him. There was an ordeal ahead that he dreaded more than anything in his life. He had thought it out in the long hours of the watch, slept on it, and made his decision, but he could not ease his mind of the fear of what was coming.

The last boat went over. The skipper came aft.

"I'll take the wheel, Mr. Chadwick. Get my glasses, if you please, and run aloft. Better rig a bosun's saddle while you're about it. One or the other of us 'll have to be up there all day."

He turned over the wheel and started. Then he stopped and came back. It might as well be now as later.

"I don't like this, sir," he said.

Hawke stared at him with a faint crease between his level, gray eyes.

"You don't like what?"

Chadwick braced himself. "This!" He waved a vague hand toward the boats. "This poaching. I don't like it."

His heart was beating fast. For the

first time since he had come on board he was afraid, desperately afraid of this quiet, thick-set man with the cold eyes.

He wasn't afraid of being thrashed. Yes, he was, too, a little, although that would be a relief in a way. He wasn't afraid of what the skipper would say, either. But he was afraid of the skipper. He had known that last night when he planned to do this.

The Old Man had him bluffed, was the way he put it to himself—had had him bluffed ever since he came aboard. And though that might do for a seaman it wouldn't do for a mate. Why it wouldn't do he didn't go so far as to ask himself, but he had snapped to his decision to have it out. And he was very much afraid.

"I don't like it, sir," he repeated quite steadily, and moved back warily as the other took his hand from the wheel.

But the skipper was only taking his cigar out of his mouth.

"Nobody's asking you to like it," he said mildly.

"Well, I'm not going to do it. I'm not going to act as mate aboard a poacher."

Hawke put his cigar back and his lips tightened around it. For a little he said nothing and looked thoughtful while the *Bering* slipped easily through a light sea. Then he said:

"If you were Maartens, or any of the others, I'd lick you. But you're not. I'd have to keep on licking you, and that'd be a nuisance. But you're going to act as mate just the same, and I'll tell you why. It's because if you don't, it'll leave me short-handed. And that'll mean that I'll have to go back to Yokohama. And if I do that I'll have to report Maartens' death—and how he died."

Chadwick went suddenly cold all over.

"I didn't kill him," he cried.

"Perhaps not—but there'd be plenty of testimony that you did. Better get the glasses and go aloft."

He spoke gently enough, but there was a cold quality of unsheathed steel underlying the tone.

"You'd perjure yourself?" Chadwick demanded.

"I would," calmly. "Better get those glasses and run aloft, Mr. Chadwick."

Chadwick hesitated an instant longer. Then he shrugged.

"All right. You've got me at a disadvantage. But I want it understood that I'm doing it by compulsion, and under protest."

A smile twitched the corners of the skipper's mouth and there was a glint of amusement in his eyes. It was just such a look as he had worn when he had refused to share the rickshaw fare with Billiter, back in Yokohama.

He inclined his head.

"As much protest as you like, Mr. Chadwick. And now those glasses—"

THE days slid by; sunny days—a few—surprizingly warm for these northern latitudes, when Chadwick swung dizzily a hundred odd feet above the deck and swept the horizon with the glass while the schooner tilted easily on the long swells or beat up to windward as the boats dropped out of sight, one by one, over the bulge of the world; days of fog when the booms dripped and there was neither sea nor sky and they sailed by guess and the muffled *wop* of the guns; stormy days when the schooner butted and wallowed her way through gray hissing seas and Chadwick crammed navigation in his watch below or listened lazily to the shouting talk of the hunters, soaking up sea lore as a sponge soaks up water.

He needed to do that. As a hand he had learned how to do what he was told but the job of mate carried with it the necessity of knowing what needed to be done, making instant decisions and seeing that they were carried out seamanly and well. He was learning that it is more difficult to give orders than to take them and the learning wasn't all easy.

It was there that a pleasant personality helped him out. The men liked him and tried to carry out his orders intelligently. And more than once in a tight place a word of suggestion from

Oscaar or Peterson or one of the others helped him through and saved his prestige.

Neither he nor the skipper had ever referred to the incident of that first morning again, nor did it worry him any longer. He had been beaten it was true, and he was doing what he had said he would not do, but the fact remained that he had faced his fear and gone down, so he told himself at least, with colors flying. The actual matter of the poaching was a minor point, had never been anything more, in fact, than a peg on which to hang a test of himself.

They were running along the edge of the forbidden ground these days, flirting with the danger-line. Sometimes as he hung between sea and sky he saw other schooners, and once, with a catch in his breath for the beauty of her, he recognized the *Kamloops*, although it was only the second time in his life that he had seen her. She shot past them to windward, a glory of white, piled canvas and slim graceful line, with the seas creaming along her lee rail. Beside the *Bering* she made him think of a lovely courtesan, smiling with a hint of a sneer at some trudging housewife with a market-basket. He thought of Swift's phrase—

"Ain't she a honey, though—for a ——, lime-juicin' stool pigeon?"

He reported her duly to Hawke—they were three days over the line at the time—and the latter nodded and glanced thoughtfully at the line of boats bobbing to windward.

"He isn't nice company," he said. "Not in these waters. But you've got to get the seal where the seal is. We'll keep the boats in fairly close for a day or two, Mister."

It was a wise decision. At a little after eleven o'clock on the morning of the third day after, the mate saw a black smudge on the horizon.

He wiped the glasses hastily and put them to his eyes again. No doubt about it. It was smoke, the smoke of a steamship. And a steamship in these latitudes meant a Russian cruiser.

"Billiter's work," the skipper said grimly, when he had dropped to the deck. "That isn't accident. If I could prove it once—"

He glanced to leeward where the horizon was obscured by a low-lying fog bank and his eyes narrowed in calculation.

Then he nodded.

"That'll do. Signal the boats to come in, Mister, and then stand by to handle the headsails. We'll run up on 'em—save time."

There was a snap to the skipper's tone and a glint in his eye that spoke of excitement.

With Chadwick at the headsails and the cook at the foresheet the *Bering* spun on her heel a moment later and headed up the line. But, hurried as the maneuver was, by the time it was accomplished the last of the boats had seen the signal, a tin wash-boiler cover run up to the main peak, and had set her spritsail to come in.

There was no time wasted now. They came down on the first boat with a rush, snatched it out of the water, while the men flung themselves aboard anyhow and, dropping the boat without stopping to lash it, squared away for the next. And almost before the last, with Oscaar, Swift and Saarenpa, was over the rail, the schooner spun around again and was racing wing-and-wing for the fog-bank.

It needed no telling now for all hands to understand the emergency. The smoke of the cruiser was already visible from the deck and getting blacker and more ominous every minute.

"Think she's seen us, sir?"

The skipper stood by the wheel, his teeth clenched on his cigar and a glitter in his eyes that the mate had never seen there before.

"Seen us? Look at her! Man, she's going to give us a run for it."

Chadwick drew a deep breath. He could imagine the scene on board—engines racking and pounding, steam piling up on the gauges, the black gang sweating and heaving coal into her—

"Have the hunters get their rifles and stand by at the rail, Mister. It won't do

any good, of course. She could blow us out of water, but it'll give 'em something to do and keep 'em from talking."

Chadwick turned away to carry out the order. He was getting a queer thrill out of it, such a thrill as he had felt once or twice just before the throw-in in an important polo match.

As he posted the hunters the skipper himself took the wheel, his eyes studying the drawing of every sail with a quiet tensity.

Nothing is more silent than a schooner running before the wind. Everything was so still that the creak of cordage or the rattle of a block made men start and glance aloft. The crew spoke in undertones, eyeing the black smudge, now blacker and nearer, and glancing uneasily from that to the fog-bank that seemed to run before them as they sailed. Chadwick had the feeling that they must be standing still, caught in some mysterious current, and more than once he caught himself looking overside for the foam streaks that fled reassuringly behind them.

The whole ship was as tense as an electric spark. The nervous laughter of the hunters showed it, as humorous indecencies flew back and forth along the rail where they stood braced, their rifles in their hands. A low-voiced jest that started among the crew forward would run the length of the ship like fire through a cane-field, and leave a trail of nervous giggles in its wake. Chadwick strained with the straining masts, trying to lift the ship on with his own, tense, muscular effort.

It was a relief when a puff of smoke spurted from the bow of the cruiser—now in plain sight—and a white column of water rose up a quarter of a mile astern.

"Short," was the skipper's obvious comment. "The next'll be nearer."

Chadwick glanced at the fog-bank, now hardly half a mile away, and back at the cruiser charging down on them with her funnels belching smoke in a trailing cloud.

"Will we make it?" He tried to make the question sound casual.

"We ought to. Look at her come!"

"Now here's where your sportsman misses it," he went on analytically, as if ashamed of his own excitement. "He gets his thrill out of being the hunter, but let me tell you, that's nothing to the kick of being the game—nothing. Ah!"

There was a sound like an express train at top speed. The line of hunters at the rail ducked instinctively. Chadwick stood very still and carefully put on his hat.

A mushroom shaped splash shot up ahead of them. He let out his breath and laughed shakily.

The skipper gave him a quick glance, and then nodded as if some judgment of his own had been confirmed. Then they slipped into the fog, and it folded about them like a wet white blanket.

The sun was blotted out. The masthead were vague shadows. It was chill and the men moved about the deck like gray wraiths in the swirling blankness. Everything was wet with the mist that drove into their faces like fine rain. There was no horizon, no sky, no sea, no time, and no distance.

"Pass the word to be quiet, Mr. Chadwick," the skipper directed. "No talking. No noise at all!"

A moment later a pall of silence enveloped the schooner. Orders were passed forward from man to man. When the ship came about a pattering of reef-points was the only sound.

For an hour or more they played a silent game of blind-man's buff. Twice they heard the pulsing of engines, once far off, and again hard on the port quarter. Then they lost them and for a long time there was nothing but the gurgle under the forefoot.

They held to the fog-bank all that day but when night shut down, black and moonless, they squared away to the eastward.

"Set the watches, Mister Chadwick," the skipper said. "No lights tonight—we'll have to chance it—and drive her all she'll take. These waters aren't healthy. Oh, by the way—" there was a look in

his eyes, far back, as if he had thought of something that amused him—"what had you planned to do in case she caught us?"

As a matter of fact Chadwick had been too much taken up with the excitement of the thing to plan to do anything, or even to remember that he was there under duress. But now he took up the challenge.

"I'd have told my story and disclaimed any responsibility," he said steadily. "I'd have turned state's evidence, and done it with a perfectly clear conscience."

Hawke nodded pleasantly.

"Quite right. Skippers usually advise their crews to do that. It doesn't do any good, of course, but there's no harm in trying. Good night, Mr. Chadwick."

CHAPTER XI

AT THE ROOKERIES

GREAT jutting promontories, black and forbidding, hurl back the seas that pound them day and night in crashing legions. Half-veiled in rainbow mist, at the rare times when it can be seen at all, a bleak coast stretches northeast-southwest—row on row of wet, spouting reefs, with the naked, steel-gray surge boiling between. A desolate, treeless land, beaten by the wind and harried by the sea. But here and there among the harsh headlands lie white crescents of sandy beach, and these the reckless poacher knows, for they are the jealously guarded rookeries of the Commander Islands.

And here, feeling her way in through the smother by guess and lead, the *Bering* came one August morning and anchored on sandy bottom to the sound of an endless and mighty bellowing.

"Them's seals," Swift explained as the fortissimo chorus rose against the breeze blowing in from the sea. "Ain't this a —— of a place?" He twitched his shoulders nervously. "I wish the Old Man 'ud get started. We wouldn't have a Chinaman's chance o' hearin' the patrol boat if it was to come 'round that point."

Chadwick glanced aft. Hawke was standing by the wheel, his cigar between his teeth. His attitude was that of a man who listens for something.

The crew idled about the deck, talking in low tones. Still the skipper stared into the fog to port as if he were spellbound. Then he turned and called softly:

"Less noise for'rd there. Mr. Chadwick, I want you."

"Here, sir." He came on to the poop. Hawke jerked his head to windward.

"Hear anything?"

"With that —— racket going on, sir?"

The mate made an irritated gesture as if to brush it away like a troublesome insect. His tone showed the strain he was undergoing. In fact the same tense nervousness could be felt like something physical in every part of the ship.

The other seemed not to notice his bruskness. He was looking into the fog, a crease between his eyes.

"Watch then. She's going to lift in a minute."

Chadwick tried to pierce the gray veil to port.

"You heard something?"

"S-st!" He made an impatient, sidewise gesture. "Ah!"

As Hawke had predicted the fog thinned a trifle. There was just time for Chadwick to see a dark shape, a schooner riding at anchor to windward, before it shut down again, and to recognize it as the *Kamloops*.

"Billiter, by ——," the skipper said. He turned decisively.

"Get the boats over, Mr. Chadwick. Take Swift—he's used to land sealing—and the crew."

"You're going to keep the other hunters aboard?"

"It doesn't pay to leave anything unguarded with Swipes Billiter around. And have Swift leave his rifle here. If we go armed it'll look as if we were hunting for trouble."

The hunter had come up in time to

hear this last. He stared at the skipper frowning.

"You mean we ain't gonna carry any guns a-tall? What are we gonna do if we run up against that *Kamloops* bunch? They're on the beach already."

"I don't expect you to run up against them," Hawke explained. "We're here for sealing, not fighting. With the feeling about Billiter what it is, some fool would be bound to make trouble if there was a gun in the crowd—so there isn't going to be one."

"The *Kamloops* crowd 'll have 'em."

"They've got guilty consciences—we haven't. I'm not going to have a lot of men crippled up in the middle of the season because you don't like the *Kamloops*."

Swift spat overside. "Well I don't like it worth a ——," he stated insolently.

"And your opinion doesn't matter worth a ——. All right. Get started. Just mind your business and let them mind theirs. And be careful not to start killing until the seal are cool. You know about that, Swift."

Armed only with the four-foot iron-bound sealing-ground clubs they dropped overside—all five boats—and rowed ashore.

Fifty yards from the beach they began to be surrounded by swimming seals and the bellowing from the land made speech in an ordinary tone impossible. A lift in the fog showed seals everywhere, going down to the sea in droves and coming out of it in legions, basking or fighting on the slippery weed-hung rocks, yelping, barking, roaring. And it also showed the boats from the *Kamloops* a hundred yards or more up the beach.

Swift, putting his hand to his mouth and his mouth close to Chadwick's ear, shouted:

"Better leave a man with the boats. These —— limeys! Why'n —— didn't the Old Man let us bring rifles?"

Chadwick nodded and signed Saarenpa to stay. Then they went inland.

In the heart of the herd the uproar was dizzying. The seal on the breeding grounds must be the noisiest animal in the world, Chadwick thought as he threaded his way through the din.

These were the harems—one huge bull, four feet high when he raised himself on his flippers to anywhere from ten to fifty cows. Sailors leave the harems alone as a general thing. The bulls are dangerous fighters, impossible to drive and surprizingly quick at getting over the ground, and the fur of the cows is thin and patchy at this season. The hunters go through the herd to the dunes where the young bachelor seals or *holluschikie* roll in the sea wheat, and so long as they step carefully in the paths between the nurseries are not molested.

Four or five hundred yards brought them through the herd to where thousands of sleek young three-year-olds played or dozed on the hard-packed sand.

"You want about a hundred at a time," Swift told him, and Chadwick nodded. He had picked up a good deal of information at one time or another from the hunters, and had a good idea of what to do. Most of the men, for that matter, had raided the rookeries before and knew the work.

At his orders they cut out about a hundred *holluschikie* from their fellows. Swift held the first bunch, puffing and staring stupidly, by rattling a stick on a tin-pot cover in front of them until the crew brought up the rest. Then he stepped aside and the drive began.

Seal driving is slow, harassing work. The animals cover hardly more than half a mile an hour in distance—otherwise the seal becomes hot and the fur loses in quality—but they are continually trying to break back or out at the sides of the herd. The drove moved off, and the men loitered behind it or on the wings prodding the slower ones forward or heading back a break for the sea.

And things went well enough until voices out of the mist to their right told them that the *Kamloops* drive was edging in their direction.

Some one from the *Bering* crowd yelled—

"Yah! Ya lousy lime-juicers!"

Chadwick whirled on him.

"Shut up," he ordered, "and the next man that makes a crack like that'll have trouble."

There was no more yelling, but it was evident that the temper of the men would make them hard to hold if trouble started.

Then it appeared from the sounds to the right that the others were coming closer and that unless one or the other stopped the herds were in a fair way to converge.

Chadwick shouted to the men on the right flank of his own herd to go slow, darted after a seal that tried to break out at right angles to the drive and collided with a startled figure in oilskins that materialized suddenly out of the mist.

The man grunted wrathfully. Chadwick brushed by him in chase of the seal, which burrowed into the *Kamloops* herd with an almost human perversity.

The man yelled.

"'Ere! Where the —— d'yer think yer goin'?" and charged after him, swinging his club. Chadwick whirled, ran in under it and hit him. The man fell back, spitting blood and teeth, and shouted.

Then everything happened at once. There were startled yells from the *Kamloops*' crew and answering shouts from his own men. Three more came at him out of nowhere. He hit a red beefy face, and saw O'Connor bowl over a sailor in a checker-board shirt and go down with him among the seals. O'Connor rolled free and snapped to his feet, but the other lay on the ground with his hands over his eyes, screaming. Oscaar scuttled past, tugging at his knife. Somebody said, "Tyke that, will yer, yer —— seal thief." Chadwick closed with a *Kamloops* man, hitting with both hands.

The fog was split with oaths, yells, the thud of blows.

"Get into 'em, the lousy lime-juicers." "Lime-juicers—lime-juicers—" "'Andsomely now, *Kamloops*—walk aw'y with 'em!" "Kill 'im—" "—Try that, will ya—"

Knife and fist and club and boot, all going at once, seals charging in every direction—

An eddy of the fight swept Chadwick away from his man. He picked out another and hit him carefully just off the point of the jaw. Somebody kept saying, "Oh, —— my leg. Oh, —— my leg," over and over. Johnson lurched past, clinched with a man in a corduroy jacket.

A man ran in, stooping low with a knife, and Peterson hit him from behind with a muckle. The man crumpled, and Chadwick said, "You've killed him," and Peterson said, "No such luck. Well, maybe. Pawlet's leg's broke."

Spinelli ran past, shouting that the *Kamloops*' hunters had their rifles, and suddenly the same cry went up from half a dozen others. Swift appeared, panting, his face twisted with rage. "The —— fool! Evey one o' their hunters is here, an they've all got rifles. The —— fool!"

Another of the *Bering's* crew came past, and another, and another. They were being driven, backing slowly, snarling, hurling insults at something still unseen in the fog. Chadwick took a forward step and brought up against a gun muzzle in the hands of an oil-skinned giant, who said:

"Move on there! Move on. Nah then, —— yer, move on—"

Behind him Swift was groaning, "The —— fool! The —— fool!" repeating it over and over. He heard Oscaar's voice, high-pitched, gentle—

"If yu putting down t'at gon ay'm gon' gut yu—yu lousy seal t'ief."

Two men passed carrying Pawlet, moaning, his leg dangling grotesquely.

Chadwick turned and stalked bitterly in the wake of the retreat.

There was nothing to be done. They climbed sullenly into their boats and shoved off under the guns of the *Kamloops*' hunters.

"An' mind yer keep orf 'til we're done, Yanks. We'll —— well 'ave a guard 'ere along the beach to see that yer do! Un'stand?"

It was an angry lot of men who came up the side of the *Bering* ten minutes

later. Every man in the crowd carried the marks of the fight, and from the mate down there was only one idea in the lot—to get the rifles and go back and shoot it out. Swift in particular made no secret of what he thought of the skipper's error in sending them out unarmed, and "old woman" was almost the only decent phrase he had used since they left the beach.

Chadwick strode up the deck to where Morgan Hawke leaned an elbow on the top of the cabin and smoked his eternal cigar.

"Well?" The skipper appraised him unemotionally. One sleeve of his canvas jacket was ripped by a knife thrust, and there was blood dripping off his fingers. The knuckles of the other hand were laid open all the way across. His nostrils quivered, and there was a white spot at each corner of his mouth.

"Well? You got yourself into trouble after all."

"They kicked us off the beach," Chadwick said shortly.

"Yes, an' what the —— else did you think they was gonna do?" Swift's voice rose behind him, hoarse with passion. "Didn't want trouble, did ya? No, you didn't. Well they went primed for it, lemme tell ya, an' we—by ——, we had to take it—had to let that gang o' lousy lime-juicers walk over us because we didn't have a gun in the crowd."

He stepped forward belligerently, his dark face twisted in a snarl. Hawke regarded him impassively and then turned to Chadwick.

"D'you think all their hunters were there?" he asked in a tone that was thoughtful.

Swift broke in again before the mate could answer.

"Were they there? I'll tell the cock-eyed world they were there, every —— one of 'em —an' every —— of 'em with a rifle. By ——, the *Kamloops* might be a gang o' stinkin' stool-pigeons, but they ain't scared of a fight."

The crew had edged aft, and now, here and there, there was a muttered oath or a head nodded agreement. For the moment Swift was their hero and their awe of the skipper was forgotten.

"Well, what you gonna do about it?" the hunter was demanding insolently. "You gonna let 'em get away with it, I s'pose."

Hawke looked thoughtful. Then, to Chadwick's amazement and disgust, he shook his head. He said:

"We're here to get the skins, not to fight. A lot of dead and crippled hunters won't help the trip to pay."

Swift drew a long breath and let it out again. He said:

"Well, I'll be ——!" His tone became puzzled, almost prayerful. "For ——'s sakes are you gonna let 'em go back to Yokohama an' tell how they run us off the beach an' got away with it? Are you?"

Morgan Hawke said—

"I'm running a sealer, not a battleship, Swift."

For a moment the hunter stared incredulously. Then he opened his mouth and said what was in his mind. Chadwick stood aghast and the crew shifted their feet uneasily while the storm of blasphemy rolled and crackled. And through it all the skipper leaned on the top of the cabin and watched him with a sort of impersonal curiosity.

And at last, as though he had exhausted the last ounce of his invective, the hunter finished:

"—an' by ——, you fish-belly, if you haven't got guts enough to stand up to a crew o' lousy stinkin' limey stool-pigeons, I have. Come on, boys! Get the rifles!" And he turned on his heel.

"Swift!"

The skipper did not move or change a muscle of his face but the word cracked out like the lash of a whip and the hunter, accustomed by long years to ship's discipline, turned involuntarily.

"Keep away from those arm-racks, Swift."

The hunter gave him a contemptuous glance. He spat deliberately on the deck.

"Go to ——," he said.

They were perhaps eight feet apart. Hawke did not gather himself. He didn't even take his arm off the top of the cabin before he struck. But between two ticks of a watch he whipped across that eight feet and drove his fist into Swift's face and the man's body sailed through a perfect arc and landed on its head and shoulders.

The skipper stepped back, blowing on his knuckles.

"Anybody else?" he asked.

For a moment there was no answer. Then with a hasty shuffle of feet the crew gave ground before him. An instant earlier they had been ready to throw off all discipline. They might perhaps have done it still if there had been anybody to lead them, but what had happened to Swift had been so appallingly quick that it had taken all the heart for mutiny out of them.

Chadwick half turned as though to do it himself, but before he could speak Hawke had turned to him and said:

"Mister Chadwick, get a boat over, please, and muffle the oarlocks with rags. I want you to come with me—and Preacher."

That calm assumption of Hawke's that he was still a part of his organization seemed to take the wind out of Chadwick's sails. He said—

"Yes, sir."

Preacher sneered—

"Goin' to make a complaint to Billiter, I s'pose."

Hawke blandly overlooked the insolence of the tone. "Perhaps," he said, but there was glint in his eye that belied his mildness, and his next words were, "Bring a shot-gun, Mister. You'll find it useful."

CHAPTER XII

COCKNEY AND YANKEE

MORGAN HAWKE sat in the stern sheets with his shot-gun balanced across his knees. His face was as impassive as ever, but far back in his eyes was a tawny glint that Chadwick had seen before. He had a feeling that the skipper of the *Kamloops* was going to get a surprize before the day was over.

But when, instead of pulling toward the other schooner, they headed for the beach Chadwick could restrain his curiosity no longer.

"What are we going to do, sir?" he wanted to know.

"With a little luck we're going to make Swipes Billiter the sickest man that ever tried to hog a nursery," was the answer. "Whereabouts are the *Kamloops*' boats?"

Chadwick indicated the place where he had seen them pulled up.

"But they've got a hunter on guard there with a rifle," he warned.

"Naturally. Pull along the shore, Preacher. Easy—not too close in. We don't want to be seen. Now, Mister, keep your eye peeled for those boats, and as soon as you see 'em signal."

Chadwick took his place in the bow, puzzled, but tingling all over with excitement. They slid through the fog with slow noiseless strokes. To his right he could hear the ceaseless bellow of the rookeries. He strained his eyes through the mist.

Then he saw the boats dimly and flung up his hand.

There were six of them drawn up a few feet apart. A man in a flat cap and a corduroy coat sat on the bow of one, lighting a pipe with his rifle leaning against the gunwale close at hand. Another man lay on the sand, his head pillowed on his arms, apparently asleep.

Hawke leaned forward and spoke to Preacher, who held the boat steady with occasional light strokes of the oars. Presently three sailors appeared bent under the weight of bales of fresh skins. They woke the sleeper, who helped them load one of the boats. Then all four ran it into the water and the man who had been asleep took his place at the oars. The other three went back up the beach again.

The skipper motioned and Preacher backed off a little way into the fog. For a moment they waited. Then the bow

of the laden boat appeared, and they slid alongside.

It was done so quickly that the *Kamloops* man had scarcely time to change color. He found himself staring into the twin barrels of the skipper's shot-gun, and dropped his oars without a word and threw his hands over his head.

Chadwick said:

"Quiet! I've got you covered from here, too."

The man's head jerked around as though it worked on wires.

"Gaw blimey—" he quavered.

"It's all right." Hawke's tone was reassuring. "You won't be hurt as long as you obey orders. Pick up your oars and pull clear. Slow now. All right, go ahead."

It was as simple as that. The sailor, a very frightened little cockney, had apparently no idea but to do as he was told. The boat from the *Bering* followed close and Chadwick, with the muzzle of his gun only a few feet from the man's stomach, directed the course to the schooner.

The crew lined the rail, their faces a study in incredulous delight as the boat slid under her counter.

"Throw a line over," the skipper directed, and then to the *Kamloops* man, "Make it fast to those bales."

The man hesitated.

"Make it fast, I said! And be quick about it, —— you. You're taking your orders from me now."

He made the bales fast, and the crew hoisted them aboard with soft, gleeful cursings and delighted grins. Then the skipper said:

"All clear? Pull back to the beach again, and be very careful not to do anything that would make me slap a load of buckshot through you. Understand?"

Swift leaned over the rail, with one side of his jaw swollen. He said:

"Well I'll be ——! You're goin' back?"

"Did you think I was going to let Swipes Billiter off at three bales? He wanted to start something this morning, and now he's started it. And you can tell him that for me when you get back—you there. Now push off, and watch out for signals."

"If he doesn't obey orders and do it lively blow the guts out of him," he told Chadwick in a conversational tone, but quite loud enough for the man to hear. "We can cast his boat adrift and nobody'll know what became of him."

They pulled a dozen strokes or so. Then, out of sight of the *Bering*, they let the boats drift while Hawke asked the cockney—

"Ever see a shot-gun wound at close range?"

"No, sir." The man was badly frightened and trying not to show it. "No, sir—leastwise—"

"Well it's a very messy sight, and don't you forget it! Now you're going back to the beach and bring out another load, and we'll be with you every foot of the way. And when you're ashore we'll be sitting a few feet out under cover of the fog. Now if you try warning your hunter or any other funny business know what'll happen to you?"

"No, sir—er—yes, sir."

"Well, just so there won't be any mistake—" he ticked off the situation on his fingers—"the mate here 'll have your hunter covered and the first move he makes 'll be the last. But I'll attend to you personally. Understand? And don't forget that a shot-gun isn't like a rifle. We'll rake that beach from end to end. No chance of a miss."

"Yes, sir. I understand, sir."

"Good. Just remember that your one best bet is to keep your hunter from suspecting anything. If you doubt that just try to tell him anything and see what happens. Got it all clear now? All right, go ahead."

The *Bering's* boat dropped astern. The man picked up his oars again, his eyes on Chadwick's gun. And presently they came to the beach.

Preacher backed water softly. The hunter was sitting in the same place, his rifle leaning against the gunwale by his

hand. He was not looking in their direction, but there was very little chance that he would see them if he should. A gray boat on a gray sea veiled in fog is not likely to be seen unless one is looking for it. The hunter on the other hand was a dark figure outlined against white sand.

Chadwick thought of this as he covered him and wondered uncomfortably what he should do if anything did go wrong. It was hard to imagine himself driving a load of buckshot through a man who was not even aware of his presence. He wondered whether the skipper would, and he had an unpleasant feeling that it was quite probable. While Morgan Hawke was talking he had comforted himself that it was only a bluff to frighten the little cockney, but now, looking at the set of the skipper's jaw, the way his lips met and closed and the cold glint of his eyes, he was not at all sure—or rather, he was quite sure. Certainly Preacher would—or any other of the hunters except, perhaps, big good-natured Svenson. Life was fairly cheap in the sealing fleet, he had learned.

The *Kamloops* man seemed to think so at any rate. He beached his boat and ran out another which had been loaded while he was gone, and he never took his eyes off the spot where the three waited. Once the hunter got to his feet, and Chadwick went cold all over, but he only yawned and stretched and sat down again. A moment later the boat came out and they gathered it in.

"Now that's what I call service," Chadwick remarked, and the skipper nodded.

"You know," he said as they came alongside and the grinning crew hoisted this second load aboard, "I'd give the price of this haul—and that'll be a clear two thousand dollars if our luck holds—for a sight of Swipes Billiter's face when he finds out about it. Shut up, Swift! I wouldn't have you in the boat at any price. You're too —— impulsive."

"All we need is plenty of fog," he went on. "All clear there? Shove off then."

The fog held. By noon they had made eight trips, and still the skins came down the beach, and still the crew of the *Kamloops* sweated and toiled among the dunes, and still the crew of the *Bering* joyously hoisted them aboard. There was no knocking off for dinner. Men who raid the rookeries seldom stop to eat as long as it is light.

By three o'clock they had completed the eleventh load and were starting back for the twelfth, when Chadwick, in the bow, noticed something that worried him.

It was something about the little cockney, a look, perhaps, or something about the way he held himself, something too indefinite to put into words. It made him a little uneasy. He had a vague feeling that something had gone wrong, and that the man knew it. Once he almost called a halt to tell the skipper, but that seemed absurd. All he would have been able to say would be, "I don't like his looks," and the skipper would think he had lost his nerve.

He hadn't lost his nerve—he knew that. But all day he had been keyed up to a high pitch of alertness, and any slight change of expression was certain to register on his mind. He told himself that it was his own tenseness that he was feeling and nothing else. But all the same he was uneasy.

They slid in. Preacher backed water, and the other boat shot ahead. Chadwick studied the shore with a crease between his brows.

The hunter had moved and was sitting a little behind one of the boats. Nothing particularly suspicious in that. There was a loaded boat ready. The little cockney stepped ashore, stepped across—

And then he saw it. Where there had been six boats drawn up at the water's edge, there were seven now!

It all came over him in a flash. Somebody had come ashore from the *Kamloops* to find out why the skins weren't coming aboard. Now he knew why the cockney had looked as he had. He had seen the seventh boat on the last trip. And that meant that the man from the schooner

must have been ashore for at least twenty minutes.

He leaned forward and touched Preacher on the shoulder. The hunter turned inquiringly.

There was a sharp *thut.* Preacher's face took on a curious expression of bewilderment and he slid from under Chadwick's hand into the bottom of the boat. At the same instant something whined overhead like an angry hornet and the water overside was pitted with little spurts.

Just for a fraction of a second Chadwick stared, puzzled. Then he dropped his gun and sprang to the oars. The skipper's shot-gun roared twice. He pulled with a jerk that lifted the bow out of water. A splinter flew up from the gunwale.

"Starboard! Starboard, and snatch her!"

Hawke rammed two shells home and fired blind into the fog just as the bow flirted around and a little storm of spurts flew up astern.

"All right! Steady as she goes! Snatch her!"

They were heading along the shore now. He took half a dozen frenzied strokes.

"Way enough. Let her drift."

A dim, gray shape charged past their stern, and then another, half seen for an instant and then swallowed up in the mist. Hawke laughed a tense, nervous laugh.

"I thought those last two shots would draw 'em. Putting out for all they're worth, and way too excited to look inshore, naturally."

He crouched in the stern, peering into the mist while the boat tilted a little in the swells and the dead hunter rolled to and fro gently.

Chadwick tried to hold the boat steady with the oars and, failing, wiped his face on his sleeve. It had been so sudden that he had not had time to be afraid but now he had a feeling that his face was white and he saw that his hands were quivering a little. He wondered if Hawke noticed it. He supposed he was afraid.

He laughed shakily and said, "I'll bet Billiter's crazy," to be saying something to cover his feelings.

The skipper was not looking at him but back into the fog. He said:

"You'd think so, the way they put out after us. They must have been laying for us. It's just as well we didn't head back for the schooner."

For the first time Chadwick began to appreciate the quickness that had brought them in here. He said fervently:

"I'll say it is, sir! But what are we going to do now?"

"Sit tight for a little. And then go after the rest of the skins."

"The rest of the—huh?" For an instant he was too astonished to think of sea etiquette.

The skipper frowned impatiently.

"Of course. That's what we're here for, isn't it, skins? You saw how that boat went boiling off into the fog, didn't you? Well, it's nine chances out of ten that the rest went too, all seven of 'em. Six anyhow, one was loaded. They weren't stopping to think of the skins they left on the beach. Let me tell you, that crowd is mad."

For a moment Chadwick stared at him. As the beautiful simplicity of the thing sank in it left no room for fear. That was gone.

He snapped his fingers.

"By the Lord Harry, I believe you're right, sir. And us here! And nobody to watch the skins—"

"Why should there be? Don't they know we're heading back to the *Bering* with all we've got? Nobody but a plain —— fool would hang around here after they'd been bushwhacked once. And Swipes Billiter may not think highly of me at the moment but I'll bet he doesn't think I'm a —— fool. And even if they did leave one man, or two—"

"Listen. If we landed here and sneaked around by the back of the beach, came on 'em from the land side—"

"Who says a college education's wasted?" commented Hawke with a grin. "Come on! Let's go."

It was a weird business, this threading

the rookeries to the roaring of thousands of unseen seals. Chadwick's heart was pounding and his breath came fast. He gripped his shot-gun and followed the dim figure ahead, straining into the mist and trying not to think of the leaping bullet that might end the adventure then and there.

Then Hawke stopped and flung up an arm. Chadwick went rigid and threw the safety catch on his gun before he saw what the skipper was pointing at, a dozen bales, dumped down on the beach, and apparently entirely unguarded.

"Pretty soft," was his slightly tremulous comment, and the skipper said:

"We've only got room for four in the boat. Ain't it ——?"

"Look, here's where they did the shooting from," he added, and pointed to a litter of empty shells. "They couldn't see us from here, but they knew about where we'd be. Must have been a luck shot that got Preacher. Well, that's tough, but it can't be helped now."

That, thought Chadwick, was a man's epitaph in the sealing fleet—

"Tough, but it can't be helped now."

Well, there were worse ones.

Aloud he said—

"What if I reconnoiter down the beach a little?"

The other nodded.

He had had an idea that they might have left the loaded boat in their hurry. He found that it was so, and reported it to the skipper a moment later.

"I don't see any point in passing up anything—do you, sir?" he added. "Let's load ours, and then I'll go back and bring it down."

Morgan Hawke said—

"And you wanted to go into an office!"

It took two trips to carry the four bales down, and when the last was stowed Chadwick stepped ashore again.

"If you'll wait here I'll bring the other boat down in a few minutes," he said, and disappeared into the fog.

It was only a matter of a few yards. He was walking carelessly, whistling, when he came in sight of the boat and saw a man sitting on the bow.

The whistle stopped. Chadwick caught his breath sharply and snapped his gun to his shoulder.

The man was looking out to sea and his back was toward him. He had a rifle across his knees, and as Chadwick looked he leaned it against the boat and took out his watch and stretched.

Chadwick's first feeling, curiously enough, was anger. He had come to get the boat and add a final triumph to the doings of the day, and here was this yawning lump, not even conscious that he was interfering with the plan. The man must have been close at hand all the time, he thought irritably, and that angered him too because it frightened him. Asleep probably.

"A —— of a way to keep watch."

He brought his gun to his hip and crept forward through the sand. He had come to get that boat and he was going to have it.

Once the man dropped his hand to his gun, and Chadwick stiffened but the gesture ended in scratching his leg, and he went on again.

"Scratch, —— you," he muttered. "I'll bet you're lousy!" Which was manifestly unfair.

Then when he was barely ten feet away the other turned his head casually, and their eyes met.

Chadwick gasped. Then he grinned. There was no mistaking that drooping yellow mustache and those squirrel teeth.

"Hello!" he said. "Don't move, please." He stepped forward cautiously, keeping the other covered. "Don't you remember me? I seem to recall that you never forget a face."

Billiter's eyes were bulging and the veins stood out on his forehead.

"Gaw blimey—Chadwick!"

"Mister Chadwick," he corrected him pleasantly. "I'm mate now. Just keep your hands where they are, please, and kick that rifle toward me. Quick now! Thanks."

He picked it up with one hand and

heaved it as far as he could up the beach.

"And now run that boat out till she's afloat and hold her there."

Billiter half moved to obey, then sat himself down solidly again.

"Like —— I will," he sneered. "An' what are you goin' to do abaht it?" He folded his arms and regarded the younger man defiantly.

This was a contingency that had never occurred to Chadwick. He hesitated, then took a leaf from Hawke's book.

"I'll blow a hole through you as big as that. A shotgun isn't like a rifle, you know."

But neither was Billiter like the little cockney who had been so easily bullied earlier in the day. His yellow mustache lifted as his lips drew away from the squirrel teeth.

"Oh no yer won't, an' I'll tell yer w'y. You carn't do it, that's w'y."

"Why can't I do it?"

"Go on an' shoot if yer don't believe me, for I won't move the boat a bleedin' inch." He spat contemptuously. "Gentleman," he said. "That's your sort. Go on an' shoot."

Chadwick moved the gun up threateningly. He hesitated. And then the absurd humor of the thing struck him and he wanted to laugh.

He did laugh.

"You've called the turn," he admitted. "I couldn't shoot you in cold blood, of course, although I've no doubt you'd shoot me."

"Ah!" said Billiter.

"But I'll tell you what I could do," he said, stepping in a little closer. "I could bat you in the jaw with the butt and knock you cold, and I'd love to. So if you want to avoid that embarrassment you'd better run the boat out."

Billiter glared. His whole face seemed to swell. Then slowly and stiffly he got up and did as he was told.

"You'll be sorry for this," he warned.

Chadwick took his seat in the stern.

"You row," he suggested. "And while I think of it, let's understand each other. If you stop rowing or try any foolishness you'll get the bat on the jaw." He waggled the gun-butt suggestively. "But if you were to make the mistake of trying to grab the gun, I'm afraid even my gentility wouldn't keep me from blowing you all over the place. You catch the distinction?"

Morgan Hawke stared as they came alongside. Chadwick said, "I've brought a friend, you see—chap I met in Yokohama." He couldn't resist that.

The skipper said:

"Well I'll be ——! Well, what do you think of my mate, Swipes? I got him cheap, you remember—three dollars Mex."

Billiter said—

"Yer —— Yankee thief!"

And that was the last time he spoke until after the skins were hoisted up the *Bering's* side and his boat was cast off. Then he rested on his oars and looked up at Hawke leaning over the rail, and his eyes were murderous.

"You w'yte. Just you w'yte, yer bloody pirate. There's a lawr 'll get at the like o' you, an' don't you forget it."

Hawke smiled down at him.

"Don't forget when you make your complaint that every skin I've got today came from a seal you killed—in Russian waters," he suggested.

"You w'yte," Billiter repeated, and there was a baleful gleam in his eye. "Just you w'yte. This'll be the sickest d'y ever you spent, yer Yankee pirate. Just w'yte. That's all I arsk."

CHAPTER XIII

WAITING

"HOIST that boat in," Hawke directed swiftly as the skipper of the *Kamloops* disappeared into the fog. "Get those skins in shape for stowing, quick as you can, Mr. Chadwick. We're due for a lively time shortly unless I miss my guess."

Two sailors jumped to the tackles. Chadwick herded the rest amidships, for the *Kamloops'* crew had sent the skins

down just as they ripped them off, intending to flense and salt them on board, and the last seven bales were yet to do.

But before they had slashed open the third bale, it came with a *chug* as a bullet thudded solidly into the mainmast.

An instant later the air was filled with a humming as of angry hornets. A splinter flew from the rail. One of the sailors dropped his flensing knife with a howl as a bullet struck it and ricocheted screaming into the fog.

Chadwick heard the skipper shout—

"Down—get your heads down!"

He saw his gang throw themselves flat on deck. Benton ran past with a rifle. He darted aft toward the cabin armracks and collided with Swift, bent double, who panted, "Keep your head low, you —— fool," and scuttled down the cabin companion like a rabbit. As he followed he had a glimpse of Jim Peace, the big Nova Scotian, kneeling by the rail stuffing shells into his magazine.

He jerked a gun from the rack. Swift ripped open a box of shells with his teeth and gave him a handful.

"Here—don't waste 'em."

He thrust them into his pocket and ran on deck again.

The firing stopped as abruptly as it had begun. There was no sound but the deep distant roar of the rookeries and the occasional creak of the boom or whine of the rudder.

Peace, braced by the port rail, was whistling tunelessly through his teeth. Benton tinkled an empty shell out on the deck, blew through his bore, and spat. Somebody laughed, forward, a nervous jangle, and some one else snapped,

"Shut up, —— you!"

Hawke said: "Look out for a rush. They carry seven boats to our five—four, now Preacher's gone and Pawlet's laid up. Better station the crew at the rail with muckles, Mister. I'll issue out what guns we've got left."

Chadwick made his dispositions and came back to find Swift, his rifle resting on the rail, staring out into the mist.

The little hunter nudged him.

"Looka there!"

It was a moment before he saw it—a dim, gray shape on the water.

"One o' their boats. Watch."

Swift raised his rifle, took aim deliberately and fired. For an instant Chadwick thought he had missed. Then a dark figure rose out of the boat, stretched to its full height and toppled overside.

Instantly the schooner was ringed with pale flashes. Bullets whined and thudded. There was a choking cry from the port quarter. Swift fired rapidly but carefully four times, and said—

"Hold up, fella, your magazine's empty."

The shooting stopped suddenly. Chadwick discovered that although he was not conscious of having fired at all he had shot away a full magazine and was furiously clicking the hammer down on an empty chamber. He thought:

"This isn't like a battle at all. Just a lot of shooting."

But Swift was saying—

"Somebody hit, I guess."

He peered forward to where a little knot of men were gathered around something on the deck.

"Hurt bad?" he called softly.

"——, he's dead. Got it smack in the throat. Larsen."

He threw out an empty and reloaded.

"Well, it's a fair exchange. I got one. Teach the limeys to keep their distance anyhow."

The rudder creaked and whined. The booms dripped forlornly. Chadwick blinked as a drifting wisp of powder smoke stung his eyes, and glanced down the deck. Peace was still whistling almost soundlessly. Svenson had a rag out and was cleaning his sights, blowing on them and then running the rag over them. Benton, the lean Yankee, stood at the rail, braced, his brows knit and his lips drawn back, breathing slowly through his teeth. The crew crouched or sat behind the rail, with knife or muckle, white and tense, or careless or stolid according

to temperament. One was plaiting a watch-guard.

He glanced at the skipper by the mainmast, his rifle across his arm. His teeth were clenched on an unlighted cigar and his face was wooden, but there was a glitter in his eyes and the little knot of muscle at the angle of his jaw twitched and tightened from time to time. Once he turned.

"You, Johnson! What the ——'s the matter with you, man?"

The sailor stared up at him, glassy-eyed. His face was white and twitching and he was sweating although the mist was chill. He wet his lips.

"It's the shooting, sir. Never could stand it. It sorta gives me the creeps. I ain't scared, sir. Knife work, now—"

"Well, buck up. Takes his weight in bullets to kill a man,"

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir."

"Funny!" Swift philosophized in a low tone. "Now I can stand anything but butterflies, and there's some I know is scared o' snakes. But shootin'! ——, they either hit you or they don't."

They waited, breathing hard, rifles cocked and ready. The slow minutes ticked off. The schooner swung at her mooring chain. Presently a little breeze ruffled the sleek swells, and the word ran down the deck—

"She's going to lift."

A shadow showed overside. Swift brought up his gun and then lowered it with a low laugh. The shadow became a boat. One of its occupants lay on his face on the bottom, still gripping a rifle. The other sagged drunkenly against the gunwale. Chadwick recognized him for one of those he had seen on the beach that morning.

The boat drifted down on the schooner, touched and rubbed alongside for the whole length. It was like a stray cat begging to be taken in. Then it drifted off forlornly into the fog.

The breeze freshened. Little waves began to slap the sides, and the mist drove against their faces. A wan glow appeared to the westward.

Chests filled. Muscles tensed. Fingers caressed triggers. And then with curious suddenness the fog lifted and they saw the hazy sun and the seal on the shore and an empty waste of gray water.

The *Kamloops* was gone.

CHAPTER XIV

DISASTER

THERE was a moment of silence, some surprized swearing, and then a quick, excited babble:

"Ran 'em out, by ——!" "—— the lousy lime-juicers!" "Hog the beach, will they?" "Yeah—an' who was saying this mornin' that the Ol' Man didn't have the guts of a rat?" "I never! I said—" "Aw, who the —— cares what you said?" "Whe-e-e-e!"

Chadwick turned to Swift.

"That'll be something for 'em to tell when they get back to Yokohama!" he said with a touch of malice.

But Swift's face was troubled. There was a crease between his eyes as he stared out toward the mouth of the bay, where the *Kamloops'* topsails were just visible through the rapidly thinning haze.

"Now what in —— did they do that for?" he muttered uneasily.

Chadwick shot him a surprized glance.

"Because we ran 'em out, didn't we?" he said with a touch of impatience. "What does it take to satisfy you anyway?"

Swift frowned. "I'll tell the world this don't. Ran 'em out, ——! An' them with seven boats to our five! We was expectin' 'em to rush us an' here the slant-heads goes an' runs out on us. An' I'll tell the world I don't like it. There's somethin' back o' this."

He had hardly spoken before Hawke broke into their conversation from the poop. He was standing by the wheel, his feet a little apart, chewing on an unlighted cigar.

"Mr. Chadwick! Get that mess cleaned up for'r'ad and get at the skins. And

then get ready to pull our hook. We're going to get out of here."

"Yes, sir."

"And snap into it, Mister." His lips tightened around the cigar. "What I want tonight is sea-room and lots of it. And tell the Doctor to serve out hot coffee. This has been a messy job."

How messy, Chadwick hardly realized until he went forward and found only six effectives to answer his call. Larsen and Preacher lay side by side on the forecastle head, waiting for the canvas and needle that no one had time to supply. Pawlet was in his bunk with his leg clumsily set and bound. Saarenpa sat in the scuppers with a bullet hole through his shoulder and a boat-steerer named Horsfall had been hit in the hand. There were smears of blood on the planking, and empty shells rolled underfoot.

He sent the wounded men aft to be cared for and set the six to get things in shape again. Meanwhile he stepped into the galley to deliver the message about the coffee.

The cook was sitting on a box with his head pillowed on his arms on the little scoured table and a pan of the inevitable potatoes in front of him. In spite of the carnage outside, Chadwick couldn't resist a grin.

"Hey, 'Goost, the battle's done, the strife is o'er! Wake up and get busy."

He stepped through the open door and shook him by the shoulder. "Hey, wake up, you sleeper."

The schooner rocked a little in the swell. The scoured, burnished pans on the wall clashed tinnily. Chadwick dropped his hand and stepped back with a sharp intake of breath and a sudden catch in his throat. He shut the galley slide.

Presently four men came and laid the cook beside Preacher and Larsen. Patient, kindly 'Goost would never see his mother and sisters in Hamburg again.

There was plenty to be done and no surplus of hands to do it. Oscaar was set to sewing up the bodies, while the mate threw aside sea etiquette and toiled with the rest at the flensing and stowing.

"Look there, sir!"

He turned at the shout. From the rocky headland to the east, a thin column of smoke was rising. For an instant he watched it as it thickened and darkened and whirled away inland. Then—

"Stand by to weigh anchor," he shouted and raced aft to the cabin.

"Smoke signals to port, sir," he gasped. "The *Kamloops*—"

Morgan Hawke was just finishing with Horsfall's hand. He took the cabin companion in two cat-like leaps.

"Get the headsails up. Don't stop to weigh anchor, Mister— Knock out the shackle-bolt, quick as the Lord'll let you. You, Peterson, stand by to ease off the fore-boom tackle—"

Chadwick raced forward, There was a stiff breeze blowing in from the sea now and the *Bering* tugged at her anchor. He knocked the bolt loose and the chain roared out through the hawse hole. At the same instant the half-raised jib filled and she heeled over with a rush of water under her forefoot.

"Jump to the topsails and spread 'em! Lively, now!"

Chadwick set the example by being the first to spring to the ratlines. The *Bering* was leaping under them like a living thing now and as she heeled the green water rushed sixty feet below.

The smoke bellied and eddied. They must be feeding the fire with green seaweed, he thought. He was working desperately now to break out the foretopsail and behind him he could see Oscaar and O'Connor toiling on the other mast. Swift had known what he was talking about when he said Billiter had something up his sleeve. The patrol boat could see that signal for twenty miles.

"Hang on, all hands! Stand by to go about!"

They were rushing on to a rock wall, dead ahead and only a few yards away. At the word the skipper spun the wheel hard over. There was a jar, a thundering of canvas. Chadwick, gripping the stays with desperate strength, swung

through a dizzying arc and brought up with a snap and a wrench that almost broke his hold.

He came down to find the hunters gathered by the port rail in an anxious knot. Swift was swearing softly. Peace said:

"By ——, if I ever get hold of him! If I ever get hold of him—"

Svenson fingered the trigger guard of his rifle wistfully.

"What the —— d'we ever let him go for?"

"Well, anyhaow this finishes him for sealin'. He'll never dast to show up with the fleet again after this, the laousy ——!"

"Finishes him, ——!" That was Swift. "Finishes us, you mean, you Cape Cod clammer. Looka there!"

They shot out of the bay as he spoke. Away to the northeast another smoke showed on the horizon, black and trailing out across the water.

Billiter's signal had been effective. Everybody knew it was the patrol boat.

They were heading southwest now, parallel to the shore with the wind abeam. Chadwick stared desperately across the gray waste ahead and Swift, who seemed to read his thought, said:

"No fog this time. First time I ever saw it really clear in these waters, too. If we could only run before it. —— this lee shore."

Morgan Hawke, at the wheel, glanced at the patrol boat and then aloft. He took and gave a spoke, quiet, alert, studying the drawing of every inch of his canvas. His feet were braced and his lips gripped his cigar. His eyes were cold and gray as the sea itself.

"If we can hold her off till night," Chadwick thought. "If we can hold her off till night. If we can—"

Swift said—"Well, we can't."

Chadwick realized that he had been speaking aloud.

"They're makin' three knots to our one," the hunter added. "Oh, —— Billiter!"

Chadwick looked aloft at the straining canvas, he looked astern where the black plume streamed out at right angles from the patrol boat's stack, and he looked aft where the skipper handled the wheel, his face deadly calm, his eyes studying the sea ahead. At that moment he was as much a part of the *Bering* as one of her masts. He was the mind, the soul of the ship. Chadwick, looking at him, felt a thrill of desperate courage. Something would happen. Something must happen! That man would make it happen.

Swift saw the look and understood it. He shook his head. "If anybody could he could—but it's no good. We're for it this time." His tone was calm with the calmness of despair.

But he made one more outburst, when the skipper called Chadwick and told him to hide the rifles.

"Grease 'em thoroughly," he added, "don't forget the ammunition—at least fifty rounds per gun and more if you have time. Shove 'em down among the ballast. And any valuables that the crew want to leave, too. If we ever should get the *Bering* back—"

Swift, who had overheard, was bewildered, incredulous.

"We ain't gonna put up a fight?"

"No. We wouldn't have a chance. And we might get the schooner back sometime."

"You're gonna lay down? Why, you fish-belly, you white-livered, aw, ——!"

He slouched forward with his shoulders bowed. Hawke said:

"Take a couple of men to help you, and hide 'em thoroughly, Mr. Chadwick. We can't tell what'll happen. There's always a chance."

He was glad of the work that kept his body active and his mind from thinking too much. Oscaar and Benton helped. They smeared the barrels with grease and crammed them with cosmoline, and then, in the reeking blackness of the hold, close to the keelson, they stowed them.

The men came up with their pitiful possessions, a little silver crucifix such as Swedish girls sometimes give their men for luck, a watch chain made of gold

nuggets, a pair of handles for a sea-chest, cunningly plaited through many watches, a housewife with the names "Thelma" and "Hjalmar" intertwined with leaves and holly-berries, stitched on the outside in crude worsted, and last of all, Oscaar's knife.

The little man greased it and wrapped it in a rag, and laid it away sadly. "Maybe sometam' ay am getting nine notches, finding million dollar—ay dunno."

They came on deck again. The patrol boat was only a mile or so astern now, tearing through the water, her funnel belching smoke. Presently she ran up a little string of flags that read—"Heave to or take the consequences."

The *Bering* preferred to take the consequences. When you are caught red-handed with your hold full of stolen skins there is very little else you can do. And as the hunters pointed out with some detail any chance is better than the salt mines.

She ran for it and at a little less than a mile the patrol-boat opened fire.

The first shot fell short, as did the second and third. Then a splash spouted up a hundred yards beyond the bowsprit. The next one tore a hole in the mainsail.

There was no hurry. The Russian gunners were making excellent practise, and there were long scores against the *Bering*. The shell that blew off the forecastle head carried only a target charge but when Chadwick went forward there was nothing of Pawlet or his bunk, only a hole through which the spray drove stingingly and a few shreds of flesh plastered against a sea-chest.

The *Bering* held on. The four hunters stood in a low-voiced knot at her weather rail. The crew sat about the deck, white and dejected. Morgan Hawke stood at the wheel and drove her.

A section of the rail leaped up and the hunter Svenson whirled half across the deck before he brought up against the mainmast—cut in two. And then, suddenly, the deck was a hell of flying splinters. The galley disappeared in a flash of smoke and flame. Rope ends hissed and writhed through the air. Somewhere forward Johnson and Horsfall died in a rain of hurtling fragments. The fore-gaff crashed down. And then, with a rending and a tearing that brought the schooner up all standing, trembling like a frightened horse, the mainmast went overside and carried the foremast with it.

The shelling stopped. Men began to crawl out from under the boats and the litter of wreckage and look at one another shakenly, half incredulous that any one could still be alive. Hawke, with his scalp laid open and the blood running down his face, let go the wheel and sat down heavily on the top of the cabin. He ran his eye over the destruction. Then he got up and went below and no one who saw his face wanted to follow him.

The patrol-boat rocked easily a quarter of a mile away. A boat shot out from her side and presently a dapper little naval lieutenant with waxed mustache came aboard and eyed the wreckage with professional appreciation.

"You arr' arrest," he announced, whereat one or two cursed him spiritlessly and the rest stood about too numbed to say anything until a dozen Russian sailors under a petty officer took them in charge.

Later to the mid-ships cabin came a figure in a corduroy jacket and flat cap, who bared squirrel teeth under a drooping yellow mustache and laughed silently. Swift would have killed him then and there with his bare hands but the stolid guard knocked him down and held him.

Hawke said—

"Well, you couldn't resist this, could you, Swipes?"

"Ah! Well, I told yer there was a lawr would tyke care o' the likes o' you. Ho! Not 'arf."

He went off into another silent chuckle.

"A fair treat this is," he said.

"Make the most of it then. When they hear of this in the fleet—"

"Ah! They don't furnish no postal

service where you're goin'. An' you'll be there a long time."

The naval lieutenant, who seemed to have decent instincts, removed him then.

CHAPTER XV

AT PETROPAVLOVSK

ON THE east coast of Kamchatka there is a town called Petropavlovsk. It is the seat of government for a district the size of the State of New York, with a population of some three thousand not very clean souls. About four hundred of these live in the huddled log huts of the town itself. There is also a fort which commands the entrance to the harbor, where an ancient colonel drills his hundred-odd men and has plenty of leisure to meditate on the sins that got him the detail to this faraway post where nothing ever happens.

It was past the guns of this fort that a Commander Island patrol-boat towed the battered remains of a sealing schooner one chill August morning and anchored her opposite the town and half a mile or so from shore.

The schooner settled into her anchorage with a gurgle under her forefoot that was like a tired sigh, and her masts—which the patrol-boat had towed behind her in a tangle of sail-cloth and cordage, for prize money is prize money and good Norway pine sticks bring cash anywhere, while time and government coal are expendable—drifted up and rubbed mournfully alongside. There was a gaping hole to port through which one could look into her forecastle. Several bloused and booted *moujiks* did so, coming out from the town in small boats for the purpose. They also rowed around her and examined her scarred deck and splintered rail and the place where the galley had been and pointed out the havoc wrought by gunfire aft with excited gesticulations and loud cries of admiration for the benefit of the stolid guard.

And presently they were rewarded by the sight of her crew, who were herded on deck by four Russian sailors with rifles. There were eleven of these. Several wore blood-stained bandages. All were white with the pallor of hunger—the guard had been at no particular pains to make things comfortable during the four days that they had lain ironed in the midships cabin—and all were dirty and unshaven. A desperate crew, the steadily increasing swarm of small boats agreed. Americans, too, without doubt—oh, a hard gang! And the guard, nothing loath to foster the impression for the benefit of civilian onlookers, shouted fiercely at intervals and with beautiful impartiality prodded whichever one happened to be nearest with their bayonets.

The prisoners took it apathetically. When you have lost both trip and ship and wages, when you have been taken in strictly preserved waters with your hold full of stolen skins, there is nothing to do but take what comes as best you may and try to think of something that will take your mind off the long underground years that stretch out ahead.

By the time they had been paraded a full fifteen minutes and the spectators were beginning to tire there was a fresh thrill in the appearance of the young lieutenant who twirled his waxed mustaches and frowned and was sternly unaware of the admiring glances and not too low-voiced comments of the shawled, flat-faced girls in the sterns of some of the boats. They were only peasant girls, but the lieutenant was young and girls of any sort are something of a rarity in the life of the seal patrol. Besides, it isn't every day that an American poacher is captured red-handed after an exciting chase and a little admiration is not amiss no matter from whom it comes.

But duty is duty. Presently the lieutenant spat an order, and the guard with much prodding and shouting herded the prisoners overside and into the boats waiting to take them ashore.

The town of Petropavlovsk consists of a hundred or more log houses built on the side of a hill that slopes up from the harbor. Its principal street is unpaved, a

network of frozen ruts in the winter and a morass in the short summer. And it was through this ankle-deep mud that the prisoners were driven between lines of curious citizens. Nothing much ever comes to Petropavlovsk. A few fishing boats put in there and once in a while a boat from the seal patrol. The monthly visit of the cruiser from Okhotsk with supplies for the fort is an event, and the coming of the Americans caught raiding the rookeries and subdued after a terrific struggle, as the condition of the *Bering* bore witness was epic. So Petropavlovsk turned out, to the last flat-faced *moujik* and his wife, to gape and whisper and stare at the foreigners being prodded up the hill to the governor's mansion.

The governor, short and fat and not at all pleased at being disturbed in the middle of his breakfast, came out to the front door with his napkin in his hand and his little imperial quivering, and cursed them importantly before delivering himself of judgment.

The lieutenant translated:

"'E say your sheep eet ees confisticate. 'E say you shall go een tha prrison onteel shall come tha sheep shall tek you by Okhotsk for to be trried. For you eet mek tha shoots, I theenk," he added pleasantly on his own.

"You tell him the United States flag has been fired on, and that means trouble," Morgan Hawke countered instantly. "Tell him I want to see the United States Consul and see him now."

True, the United States flag is of small avail to a seal poacher, and the United States Consul of even less avail, but there is nothing like putting up a front.

The governor was unimpressed. There was a quick interchange of gutturals.

"'E say 'e care not one little —— for United States flag. 'E say, ees no consul 'ere. You weel go een tha prrison an' you weel see nobodee."

That seemed final. Hawke shrugged. There was a pause.

Swift suggested—

"Tell him he's a cock-eyed, slant-headed little wind-bag, will you?"

The lieutenant seemed puzzled for an instant. Then he smiled.

"Myself I theenk so. But ees not nize you should say eet." He spoke to a guard, who knocked Swift down with a rifle-butt.

Half a mile from the governor's house and about the same distance from the harbor there is a solidly built log block-house. Hither they were marched, and thrust one at a time through a trap door into the second story.

It was a bare cold room, perhaps twenty feet square, smelling dismally of fish and of unwashed bodies and dimly lighted by two narrow windows, one on each side. There were a couple of buckets and a pile of straw in one corner. The windows were barred and the bars were solid, as Chadwick discovered in the first few minutes after they were left alone.

He peered out. A guard with a rifle paced below and grinned up at him. There was another on the other side. He turned back from the windows with a helpless trapped feeling that was almost like suffocation.

For the most part the men had thrown themselves on the floor and were either sitting with their backs against the wall and their arms about their knees or sprawled at full length. They were moody and silent, weak with hunger and rough handling. Saarenpa lay back with his arm in a rough sling, very white, staring dully at the wall opposite. Oscaar was rebandaging a cut on the shoulder of Benton, the Yankee hunter. Morgan Hawke paced up and down the little space left in the middle of the room with a crease between his eyes.

Swift said:

"Say, what the ——'s the matter with 'em? Ain't they gonna feed us a-tall?"

No one answered. For the most part they were past caring much what happened so long as they were left alone for a little.

It was past noon before any one came near them. Then the trap was pushed up and a soldier deposited a pan of salt fish, a couple of loaves of black bread, and a

bucket of hot tea with a tin cup on the floor, and slammed the trap again.

They brightened a little at that. The skipper portioned the food into equal shares and they bolted it, taking turns drinking from the single cup. Saarenpa ate a little—listlessly.

"How long yu t'ink t'ey go'n' keep us here?" Oscaar wanted to know.

"Ain't you heard him say? Till the ship comes from Okhotsk."

Swift said:

"I seen Chick McKellar in Seattle just after they turned him loose. He'd been five years in the mines."

"How'd he look?"

Somebody asked the question apprehensively. Everybody had wanted to ask it, but for some reason they had hesitated.

"He weighed a hundred and seventy when he went in. When I seen him he was ninety-eight and didn't have a tooth in his head."

Nobody spoke for a little. Then Benton suggested doubtfully—

"When that feller comes up to feed us we could bust him on the head with the bucket and run for it."

"Where to?" some one asked, and Oscaar said:

"T'e room down t'ere iss full soldiers. Ay seen t'at when he iss coming biffor."

Hawke shook his head.

"That won't do. We'd have to go down one by one."

Swift said—

"Well if you'd seen Chick McKellar you'd take pretty near any chance before you'd go to the mines."

There were one or two assenting voices. Hawke frowned.

"Don't be a fool, Swift," he said sharply. "That wouldn't be a chance. There's a better way than that."

"Well for ——'s sakes what?"

"I don't know yet. Wait, and keep your eyes open. Something'll happen."

There had been a little stir of eagerness but now it died away and the men slumped back against the walls again. Swift said—

"Aw ——!"

"If worst should come to worst," the skipper went on, "and we should come to trial at Okhotsk, I'll do what I can for you. I'll take all the responsibility. But we haven't gone to Okhotsk yet by a long shot."

"Yeah! Chick McKellar told me that ol' Chinook Bond got up in court an' swore he'd forced his crew to raid the rookery with a gun. But Chick went to the mines just the same. An' the most o' the crew are there yet."

Chadwick couldn't sit still any longer. He got up and walked over to the window.

He could see the harbor, steel gray and a little hazy. The patrol boat was getting up steam, and a little way beyond was the dismasted wreck of the *Bering* with a tangled raffle of sticks and sailcloth and cordage trailing overside. The town below sloped down to the water's edge, with a fringe of small wharves. People moved about the streets; white-bloused peasants, and shawled women, and soldiers in too-large uniforms and flat caps. He wondered why European soldiers always wore uniforms too large for them. The sentry paced up and down and occasionally glanced up at him. Across the harbor he could see a gray-green haze of tundra swamp, and beyond, the blue of wooded hills.

The air was chill. He shivered a little and thought—

"A man would freeze or starve to death in that country out there."

He turned his attention to the bars again. There were three of these, inch-thick pieces of round iron. There was hardly more than room to thrust his arm between them.

They fascinated him, those bars. He said:

"If we had a file we could cut through them. I don't believe they're anything but soft iron."

"Yeah," Swift said. "If we had a file."

The rest had fallen into a mood of dull apathy. Once Benton announced, "Saay! This here place is laousy!" in the tone of one making an important discovery.

Oscaar said—

"All t'e yails ay ever been in wass lousy."

Later, Saarenpa, the little Finn with the bullet hole in his shoulder, became flushed and glassy-eyed, and presently he began to babble softly to himself in his own language. Chadwick pounded on the trap and finally succeeded in getting a bucket of water. He and Hawke washed the wound and bound it up for him. Oscaar insisted on stripping off his undershirt to lay over him and some of the others contributed articles of clothing.

A soldier brought them another meal exactly like the last. The light began to fade, and the windows became rectangles of misty blue. Then the crew of the *Bering* lay down, huddled together, to doze and twitch and shiver until morning.

Shortly before dawn, when the windows were turning gray, two soldiers came up and kicked them on to their feet. Saarenpa fell when they dragged him up, so they left him and herded the others downstairs. They lined them up outside, teeth chattering, breathing frostily into their cupped hands, and kept them there half an hour or so. Then they gave them breakfast—the inevitable salt fish and black bread, which they ate standing—and marched them four miles to the river bank.

There was a great pile of logs beside the stream. The sergeant of the guard pointed to it, pointed to the prisoners, waved his arms and shouted an order. Since no one understood Russian, and since the sergeant's signs might have meant anything, no one moved. Thereupon the guard fell on them and, by dint of much shouting and thumping with gunbutts, succeeded eventually in making it plain that they were to roll the logs into the water and float them downstream.

It is no child's play to haul a thirty-foot stick, two feet through at the butt, over shallows and around snags in water with an average temperature of something less than forty degrees. Oscaar, straining on the tow rope, gasped between chattering teeth:

"Ay bet yu t'is giving me fine appetite for supper tonight. T'at ol' fish tasting gude, ay bet yu."

Swift cursed as long as he had breath, and then hauled and heaved with the rest. When their strength gave out and they stopped the guards stolidly beat them on again.

Chadwick would have said that no human being could have stood three days of it, but he was beginning to discover that he still had something to learn about his ability to endure and suffer. He learned to throw himself against the tow-line with his shoulder galled raw from the harness and pull until the veins stood out on his forehead and his eyes bulged. He found out what it was to wade half a day at a time, waist-deep in icy water, and to tramp back to the block-house at nightfall so sodden-tired that he hardly knew or cared that the wind cut through his wet clothes like a knife. And he learned to gage his strength to the last ounce and weigh a moment's rest against a prod from a bayonet or the blow of a rifle-butt.

Once in Paris he remembered seeing a cab horse, a galled, knee-sprung rack of bones, leaning up against a wall with its forefeet crossed. He had thought that rather funny at the time.

The guards were not intentionally cruel. They were simply unimaginative, stolid. But sometimes things happened. Once O'Connor, the long Galway man, went berserk and came near to strangling one of them before four others pulled him off. They beat him after that, obviously not out of revenge, but to teach him not to try it again, until he lay unconscious on the river bank with the blood running out of his nose and ears, while the crew of the *Bering* raged and cursed helplessly before the muzzles of the rifles. Later they became too tired to do even that.

Spinelli, the lithe little Italian boat-steerer, died on the tenth day. The cold and the fog and the bleak indifference of the country seemed to weigh on him more than on the others. He fretted and brooded, and grew steadily weaker until

at length he fell over in the towing harness and never got up again.

And while the guards were around him, trying to kick him on to his feet, Sparkes, who had been Svenson's boat-puller, made a break for the woods.

The sergeant shouted. One of the soldiers raised his rifle. There was a sharp crack and Sparkes stumbled and went down before he had gone a hundred yards.

Swift chewed on a twig and shrugged.

"He's a lucky stiff at that," he said with calm bitterness. "An' if I had the nerve—"

"Don't be a —— fool," Hawke snapped. He was gaunt and hollow-eyed. His clothes hung from him in tatters, and his face was gray and drawn under a two-weeks' beard. But his voice still held the ring of authority. "D'you want to get away or d'you want to be killed?"

"I want to get my thumbs into that bohunk sergeant's eyes for about thirty seconds," Swift muttered.

"Then don't give him a chance to flatten a bullet against your head first."

The rest hardly looked up. They were seizing the chance to come out of the water and snatch a minute's rest. Presently the guard took Spinelli's body out of the harness, kicked it aside, and drove them in again.

CHAPTER XVI

PLANS

IN THE three weeks that they had been in the block-house at Petropavlovsk not one of them had once been warm or dry or full-fed or rested. Even Saarenpa, who pulled through by some amazing grip on life, was sent out as soon as he could walk to do what he could with one hand. He spoke a little Russian, which made it easier for the others, since the guards' only method of interpretation was the gun-butt.

Some of them were apathetic, watching each day come and go, and taking what came with a dull, ox-like patience that neither hoped nor cared nor feared any more very much. A few took it harder; O'Connor had never entirely recovered from his beating and went on with his head down, sick and listless. But Swift was working himself into a condition of mania.

Sometimes he brooded sullenly for a couple of days at a time, his eyes half-closed and his lips drawn back from his teeth, inventing fantastic tortures for Billiter or the sergeant of the guard. Then, without warning, he would break out into a fit of helpless rage and curse and rave impotently until the frenzy spent itself and left him white and shaking. There was one day when he had been unusually quiet. It seemed almost ominous to Chadwick, who had taken to watching for his outbursts with a certain apprehension.

They had come in at sundown as usual, and were sitting on the floor, watching the windows darken and waiting for supper, when Swift suddenly announced:

"I've had enough o' this. Tomorra I'm gonna kill that bohunk."

It would have been hard to miss the tenseness which underlay the carefully casual tone.

Hawke said:

"Don't be a fool, Swift. Our chance'll come if you'll only wait. And you'll spoil it if you aren't careful."

He had said it a hundred times before but this time whatever of control the hunter had left vanished. He drew a long breath.

"Wait?" he blazed, and his voice was suddenly hoarse with rage. "Wait for what? So they can work us to death, like Spinelli? What the —— chance have we got settin' here doin' nothin'? ——, ain't it better to be dead than like this?"

The others stirred uneasily. Swift's outbursts always made them nervous and restless. But Jim Peace muttered:

"By ——, that's right. So it is—right."

The skipper said sharply:

"You're making fools of yourselves,

both of you. That won't get us anywhere."

"It won't huh? Then what will?" He was off again, his voice rising and cracking. "Who got us into this? Who was it hid the rifles back there on the *Bering?* Huh? Who wouldn't let us shoot it out while we had the chance? If you had the guts of a louse—why, you coward, you—you —— fish-belly— You yella-livered rat—"

The skipper shrugged, taking the abuse for what it was—the raving of a worn-out, overdriven man behaving like a child and taking out his grievance on the first tangible thing that came to hand.

"Talk! Talk, —— you. Why don't ya do something? You brought us here! Why don't ya do something? We ain't gettin' anywheres settin' here! We gotta do something—"

On and on and on he raved, until others of the crew began to be carried away by it and to chime in, "Sure, do something!" "Anything's better—" "How'n —— are we gonna get away?" "Do something, do something! Why'n —— don't ya do something?"

It was the lack of sportsmanship in the thing that sickened Chadwick.

He raised both hands, fists clenched.

"Shut up! Shut up, you fools—"

His voice was lost in the gathering clamor. Swift leaped to his feet and seized a bucket.

"Well, by ——, I'm gonna do something and do it now!"

He strode over to the trap. The skipper said—

"We've got to stop this, Mister."

Swift was yelling:

"I'm gonna crown the first bohunk that comes up here an' run for it. Come or not."

There was an instant of pause. Then Peace growled—

"By ——, I'm with you!"

The clamor broke out again.

"Quick—they'll be up here in a second to see what's the matter." Hawke thrust through the crowd that was beginning to mill about Swift and put his hand on the hunter's arm.

"Swift," he said, not very loudly, but with a snap to his voice, "put down that bucket and get away from here."

Swift jerked free with a curse. The skipper flung out his arm in a backhanded sweep that brushed him across the room.

The little man hit the wall and came back like the bound of a rubber ball. This time the skipper caught him at arms length, and held him there, white and frantic.

"Kill him," Peace was gasping in a voice hardly louder than a whisper. "Get in behind him somebody. Oh, won't somebody kill him? Knock him off the trap!"

Since being in prison this was the first time Hawke had tried to exercise any real authority. And in the meantime he had worked with the rest of them, been beaten, driven.

The crew closed in in a muttering circle while Swift dangled in the skipper's grip and cursed and pleaded. Chadwick had thrust his way in and stood at Hawke's back. He was hardly conscious of having done it, but he was there.

Swift was screaming:

"Come on you cowards, you yella bellies! You're seven to two—"

The muttering became a growl. Somebody said:

"We don't want no trouble, sir! Better get away from that trap."

Another voice shouted—

"——, knock 'em off!"

Chadwick picked the man he would hit —Benton, as it happened—and the place where he would hit him.

And then Oscaar said:

"Whass t'e matter wit' yu fallers? Ay guess t'ey feedin' yu too rich. T'at's makin' yu ron wild, huh?"

There was an instant of strained silence. Then somebody laughed, a high hysterical whoop, and in that instant the tension was broken.

Hawke was quick to take advantage of it.

"Better get back," he said quietly. "They'll be up with supper in a minute."

"Don't listen to him," came from Swift, weakly. "Knock him off—"

"D'you want to ruin everything?" the skipper demanded. "You fools, I'm going to get you out of here."

"How?"

"Never mind how—you'll know in good time."

"T'ey comin'," Oscaar whispered.

They wavered for an instant but the madness had passed. They fell back from the trap, a little shamefaced, avoiding each other's eyes. Hawke let go of Swift, who lurched across the room and dropped in a corner where he sobbed himself to sleep like a tired child.

The rest were sitting in their places by the wall when a soldier brought up the evening ration. The skipper kept a careful eye on the trap, but no one attempted anything. The danger was over for this time.

They talked, and even joked a little that night, as if the nervous explosion just past had relieved them of something that had been pent up and ready to burst, and they felt easier for it. And, although no one said very much about the skipper's announcement that he had a plan, it was plain that it had taken effect on their minds.

Later, when the others were asleep, twitching and moaning like a pack of tired dogs, Chadwick crept over to where Hawke lay staring at the black of the window.

"You've got a plan?" he whispered. He felt that what he had done this afternoon entitled him to that much.

"Not an idea in the world."

It was incredible. He had built up so much hope in the last hour or two.

"But—"

"Oh, I had to tell 'em something or they'd have wrecked us all. That little square-head is a wonder."

"Then what are we going to do?"

"You and I are going to think of something, and do it quick. Never mind how crazy it is if it takes their minds off trying to rush the guard. That's one thing that won't work."

TO BE CONTINUED

The Camp-Fire

A free-to-all Meeting-Place *for* Readers, Writers *and* Adventurers

OUR Camp-Fire came into being May 5, 1912, with our June issue, and since then its fire has never died down. Many have gathered about it and they are of all classes and degrees, high and low, rich and poor, adventurers and stay-at-homes, and from all parts of the earth. Some whose voices we used to know have taken the Long Trail and are heard no more, but they are still memories among us, and new voices are heard, and welcomed.

We are drawn together by a common liking for the strong, clean things of out-of-doors, for word from the earth's far places, for man in action instead of caged by circumstance. The spirit *of adventure lives in all men; the rest is chance.*

But something besides a common interest holds us together. Somehow a real comradeship has grown up among us. Men can not thus meet and talk together without growing into friendlier relations; many a time does one of us come to the rest for facts and guidance; many a close personal friendship has our Camp-Fire built up between two men who had never met; often has it proved an open sesame between strangers in a far land.

Perhaps our Camp-Fire is even a little more. Perhaps it is a bit of leaven working gently among those of different station toward the fuller and more human understanding and sympathy that will some day bring to man the real democracy and brotherhood he seeks. Few indeed are the agencies that bring together on a friendly footing so many and such great extremes as here. And we are numbered by the hundred thousand now.

If you are come to our Camp-Fire for the first time and find you like the things we like, join us and find yourself very welcome. There is no obligation except ordinary manliness, no forms or ceremonies, no dues, no officers, no anything except men and women gathered for interest and friendliness. Your desire to join makes you a member.

THIS comrade can't understand how gagging gags—can't see how something stuffed into the mouth can produce the desired silence in the victim. Neither can I. Unlike Mr. Stebbings, I didn't make any experiments—just accepted the practicability of gagging on the basis that it seemed to work in real life as well as fiction and that I was merely too dumb to figure it out.

It's going to be a dangerous investigation. If gagging should prove to be ineffective in fact, merely an accepted convention in the technique of criminal procedure in real life—and it certainly is used in real life, then fiction has received a deadly blow and I shudder to think of the consequences.

But the facts should by all means be made known. I don't urge that every sincere reader of fiction should at once institute laboratory experiments and

begin gagging himself and his friends, but there are undoubtedly among us quite a good many who have gagged or been gagged and we'd very much appreciate their testimony.

Newton, Iowa.

I have been puzzled for years over a thing that seems very simple and easy to do, at least by many writers of adventure stories, and having just read "A Night in San Assensio," by W. Townend, I have had my curiosity aroused again.

In this very interesting story a man is quickly gagged, in this case by placing a stick between his teeth and tying the stick in place with a handkerchief. This is I believe a common method. Other writers seem to accomplish gagging effectively by binding a cloth or something around the victim's mouth, etc. The purpose seems always to be that the one bound can not *call out to attract attention* even of some one close by.

Now mind, please. I am not arguing that the means described did not do the business. Still after trying a dozen or so of the described methods on myself and finding that I can still make an *awful noise* at least—one that should easily be heard within a block or so even if unable to articulate—I feel that I am missing something I should know and understand. I might wish to gag some one some day and not know how.

I would suggest that you experiment a little along this line. Try Mr. Townend's method first. I believe it as effective as most that have been described in stories. I am not finding any fault with the stories except that the description of the methods used are lacking in detail perhaps, or else the victims are all minus vocal cords.

Many have written you finding fault with little things but here is something that I have never heard questioned. Personally I am very skeptical of all this gagging business. Perhaps the writers will agree with me that I am exceptionally good at putting up a holler but, short of choking me so I can not even breathe or knocking me cuco, I will defy any of them to gag me effectively by any other method.

Let's hear from a professional gagger and have him tell us how it is accomplished *in fact*. Mind, I bar the mere stopping of articulation; that's easy. This gagging business may be only poetical license and it would make a lot of good stories fall flat if it can not be done easily, so let's either have a good, quick and easy method and let the authors use it or let's just confine ourselves to dope or a crack on the bean—what?—EUGENE STEBBINGS.

IN CONNECTION with his article in this issue something from J. L. French:

Nicholas Merritt was Ashton's kinsman. He was the son of Nicholas and Elizabeth Merritt and born in Marblehead where he was baptized March 29, 1702, in the First Church. He served unwillingly on Low's vessel and finally escaped at Saint Michael's, in September, 1722, where he was imprisoned by the Portuguese authorities and not released until the following June. Making his way to Lisbon he at last reached home safely on September 28, 1723.

Joseph Libbie also served, unwillingly at first. He was with Low in the *Rose Frigate* when she was lost in careening in the spring of 1723, and pulled Philip Ashton out of the water. He then served with Low's consort, Capt. Charles Harris, in the sloop *Ranger*, and on June 10, 1723, with Harris and forty-two others, was taken by H. M. ship *Greyhound*, Capt. Peter Solgard, commander, between Block Island and Long Island, and brought into Newport, R. I. The pirates were duly tried and on Friday, July 19, 1723, Captain Harris, Joseph Libbie and twenty-four others were hanged within the sea mark inside of two hours.

Lawrence Fabens served, unwillingly, on the schooner *Fancy*, under Low, but succeeded in escaping at St. Nicholas in the fall of 1722, shortly after Merritt escaped as is told elsewhere. He was probably the son of James and Johannah Fabians, born in Marblehead about 1702, where nine of his brothers and sisters were duly baptized in the French Church between 1688 and 1709.

The Whaling story and "A Voluntary Crusoe," by Edward F. Perkins, are from "Na Motu, or Reef-Rovings in the South Seas," published by Pudney & Russell, New York, 1854. All of these books are quite unknown in this country and only found in the Library of the Museum of Natural History because it tries to get hold of practically every book of value on exploration that is published.

As for the American book (the last named) I have never seen another copy although I have worked on sea literature in all the leading libraries of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, Nevada and the "Congressional" at Washington. As to the rarity of this material, therefore, you may congratulate yourself.

Regarding the single query as to the body of the MS. concerning "Alligators in the Sea" (?) I have consulted authorities—one at the Museum of Natural History, who assure me that they are sometimes found in or near sea islands as in this instance. The statement is therefore o.k.—J. L. F.

GOING back to the discussions started by Raymond S. Spears' "The Were Cougar," here is a letter from an English comrade:

London, England.

In looking through your June 23rd issue I saw references to children "adopted" by wolves. I was in India for a number of years and heard tales of such things fairly frequently. There was some missionary orphan society, I forget their name, who recorded it in their Annual Report.

Anyhow, coming down to the present, I enclose a cutting from a recent London paper, which shows the story repeated by people of repute.—HAROLD WARD.

P. S.—In my opinion no yarn can be too tall about India or its people. I have seen many queer sights "out East."

The English newspaper article follows:

An astounding story describing how two native children were reared in a wolves' lair comes from India. An expert to whom the narrative was submitted was skeptical, but admitted humans can subsist on any kind of animal milk, while another expert suggested that the wolves would be more likely to devour the children. The story, however, is vouched for by the Rev. J. A. L. Singh, of Midnapur, Bengal, and in part by Bishop H. Pakenham-Walsh, of Bishop's College, Calcutta. Bishop Walsh's narrative, published by the *Westminster Gazette*, is as follows:

"At the end of August, 1926, I visited the orphanage run by the Rev. J. A. L. Singh and his wife at Midnapur, West Bengal. When visiting a distant part of his district the villagers told Mr. Singh there was a certain path which they never used because it was haunted by Bhuts (demons). They had seen these Bhuts, they declared, enter a hole at the foot of a big ant-heap. Mr. Singh asked them to show him the place and they pointed out the hole. They saw nothing and at his suggestion sixteen of them started digging. After some time two wolves darted out of the hole. Then a she-wolf came to the entrance and snarled, growled and refused to move, and they were obliged to shoot the poor brute. Digging on, they came to the den, and found there two wolf cubs and two girls, one aged two, the other about eight.

"The girls were very fierce. They darted away on all fours, going faster than any one there could run, and uttering guttural barkings. They took refuge in a bush and were eventually caught. It is not an uncommon thing in that locality for children to be exposed when infants, especially if they are girls and not wanted. It is probable that the mother wolf had found one such baby and taken it home, carrying it by its clothes. Six years after the she-wolf must have found another baby and, having found pleasure in having a 'cub' that remained small and did not leave the den, adopted it too. Both girls were Bengalis. Subsequently, Mr. Singh took the children to his orphanage in Midnapur, where his wife did her best to nurse them to life.

"The younger, however, developed dysentery and died. The elder shed a few tears, the only sign of emotion she ever made. The elder child grew up. She is of normal size and there is nothing peculiar about her except that she sits animal-like and does nothing for hours together. Her face has a vacant appearance, but when she says one of the thirty words she has learned, especially when she gives the Bengal greeting and says 'Namaskar,' she smiles sweetly and has a pleasing face.

"For a long time she could not keep clothes on. They stitched some strong cloth tightly round her body which she could not tear off, and in course of time she submitted to clothes. For a long time she ate with her mouth down to the dish, but eventually they taught her to use her hands. She takes no interest in other children or in toys or games. She has no fears usual with children and prefers the dark to the light. She was not afraid of fire until she felt it burn her, and since then she has given it a wide berth. She was baptized some time ago and is called Kalama. When the two children were alive they slept huddled one on top of the other, like puppies. She never barks now, or utters noises, except the words she has learned. She is very gentle with animals and will follow them about. When a pariah dog came in and all the other children ran away, she made friends with it."

NOTE—She is still alive.

NOW listen, sailor-men, have a heart. Read Albert Richard Wetjen's letter before you open up on technicalities of sea mythology, legend and superstition. He's not starting an argument at all—he's just drawing you a quaint picture and telling you a fanciful tale. It isn't at all our usual type of story carrying the usual invitation to pounce upon any inaccuracies of fact material. There ain't no sech animal as fact material in it and as to sea "mythology," why, what would any mythology be without variations?

Incidentally, as you have noted from the "Salem, Oregon" at the top of their letters, Mr. Wetjen and Donegan Wiggins of "A. A." inhabit the same town. Not only that but, through the common interest of Camp-Fire and the magazine, have become good friends and put in considerable time together.

One of Mr. Wetjen's stories was awarded the special prize for a "short" short story by the O. Henry Award Committee at the dinner of the Society of Arts and Sciences, January 19. Another was included in O'Brien's collection of Best British Stories of 1926, and "The Isle of France," first published in *Adventure*, has been chosen by the New York *World* for its collection of the best magazine stories of the year.

Salem, Oregon.

I have tried to incorporate in the story all the old sea myths, jokes and superstitions and beliefs that I have heard mentioned in many fo'c's'les. Some of the subjects mentioned will be utterly beyond a landsman, I expect, but a sailor should "get 'em." I'm aware that I have left out many of them, such as red and green oil for the port and starboard lights,

St. Elmo's Fire which runs up to the trucks and along the yards some nights and is supposed to foretell disaster, the "extra hands" (ghosts) that move among the crew and help with the work sometimes in tight corners, etc., and others. I left them out chiefly because it seemed to me that to drag them all in would be to spoil the story and make it too much like a list of sailor beliefs. The mention of Casey Jones, brother to Davy, is, I think, entirely original and, it seems to me, logical, Casey Jones being mostly mentioned by railroad men and ships' firemen. To any criticisms from seamen as to the wrong interpretation I have put upon various myths, etc., I would say that "different ships, different ways, and different fo'c's'les, different yarns." I guess that's all.—D. W.

THE young man in a penitentiary who wrote to George E. Holt of our writers' brigade and "Ask Adventure" for advice has served his sentence and has presumably begun his fight to rehabilitate himself. Mr. Holt has not heard from him and suggests that he probably expects to get his message through *Adventure*. You will remember that he wrote to Mr. Holt in his A. A. capacity, asking what opportunities Morocco offered to such as he and that he has already had his answer on that specific point.

But here is some further practical advice, which may be of very real value to thousands of others in like case. The first is a letter from one of you to Mr. Holt. In a P. S. it bursts forth against the anti-weapon movement, but I do not think Mr. Cramer means that all who favor that movement are criminals, Reds or traitors. All three of these classes do favor it, naturally enough, but among its advocates are many others who are perfectly well-meaning Americans who have been swept away by the present futile mania for trying to cure all evils by passing a law and doing nothing else. Personally I'm quite willing to work for anti-weapon laws the minute their advocates can give me any real assurance that if good citizens pass and observe such laws they will be even as secure as at present against crooks at home (who will always find means, just as they always have in the past, to be armed in spite of legislation) and against foreign countries whom daily news reports show to be very, very far from being through with war. I'm strong for Utopia if we can get there, but I don't hanker to be assassinated on the way, particularly if it happens to be a road that doesn't lead there anyhow.

Meanwhile let's pass a fool law against any more fool legislation. It will at least serve to get some of that fool craze out of our systems.

Nicholson, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Geo. E. Holt, Dear Sir:—Have just finished reading in November 8th issue of *Adventure* (of which, by the way, I have not missed more than three issues in the past five years), the reprint of the letter from the young convict, Y. P., and am moved to shoot in my humble suggestion for him—chances are, I know, that this will probably be of no use to him, but if it may be, he's sure welcome; it's just part of my bit for the other fellow.

The other day I picked up on the road a young chap who was plugging along in the cold, driving rain. Gave him a hitch in my car as far as I went, and found that he was trying to bum it from Cleveland, where he went broke, to Newark, where he had work promised. No folks and kind of down on his luck, hitting one of the bumpy stretches in the road as all chaps do once in a while. Winter coming and no outfit. On the impulse, I told him the best I could see for him would be to re-up in the Army for foreign service. Panama I suggested, as that's the place I've had mine; go back to work for Uncle Sam until his luck turned, anyway, and there's more chance there for a man who'll use his noodle a bit than any other place I know, and a darn sight more sure.

What's this to do with the present case? Just this: Why not your friend go to work for Uncle Sam until he gets on his feet and finds himself? I have known several ex-prisoners who have made men of themselves in the Army, for, thank God, there's one place in the world where a man's looked at for what he is himself, and the fellow he left behind him when he held up his hand is forgotten, unless the man himself keeps him alive, and then God help him! So I say to Y. P., try and enlist with the Army, go to Panama service I'd say, keep his mouth shut at all times, use his head and learn as fast as he can; keep trying if he thinks it kills him, and lay off the booze and above all steer clear of coke and mariahuana (those two things will surely undo all he may do). And I'll bet a cookie he'll find what he wants, a chance to make good and a chance to be a man, known and looked at as a man, among Regular Army *MEN*, providing he's got, and shows, the stuff I think he's made of. And good luck! *Vaya con Dios*, brother. Yours as a comrade.—R. F. CRAMER.

Might suggest the same for Comrade McKlean in A. A. He'll find what he wants.

P. S.—While I'm at it I'd like to say my say on something that's been rumbling around in my head ever since the darn-fool thing was started—get it off my chest, sort of. And that's this fool disarmament thing, the anti-weapon law, the most unutterably ——-fool, un-American thing that was ever started. Started by whom? By a pack of anti-American scoundrels, whoever they are. And fostered by whom? By that ever-increasing disgrace upon America's fair name, her thieves, highwaymen, bootleggers, anti-government Socialists, the whole darn mud-wallow of un-American, anti-American traitors, no less. For God's sake, get every real he-man American who has man enough in him to want to save and protect this country of ours as a government by the people for the protection of the people to get on his hind legs and say his say and do his bit to prevent this thing from being passed under their noses—as surely it will if real men don't rise up and knock it in the head for good and all—and that sooner than our poor Sleeping Judases of would-be-lukewarm - if - they-had-ambition-enough-American men are thinking for.

Speaking from experience? Know my dope? Yes. That's the only why-for of my ever rising up and speaking my piece this way, and I don't care if you do publish it or throw it in the waste-basket—I'd like the subject on the front page of every American newspaper in the country till Americans would know the danger they're sleeping in.

I left the U. S., in 1920, a country more or less successfully overcoming the effects of the war. I may get knocked over the head some nice night for saying the things that now follow, but in Germany I saw, in a supposed-to-be peaceable monastery corridor, a rack of rifles hidden behind a hinged picture, left open, I suppose, by accident. Not a very well-known thing that a group of soldiers in A. F. in G. found an underground passage stacked with new ammunition. (I understand this, no proof.) But what were they for? That's that. In Panama I've seen drink and drug crazed natives cut up Americans who, obeying the law, went unarmed. I came to the States and found, in place of the States I left three years before, the travesty of a government wound up in so many conflicting laws they could not enforce any of them. Could they force criminals to go unarmed? Two boys beat to death their friend and pal in Chicago. Did they die for it? Armed robbers robbed and murdered a few days ago in New Jersey. Armed men rioting and murdering in Herrin, Illinois, a few months ago. Pedestrians attacked and robbed everywhere. A man, drink-crazed, threatened the life of his boarding-mistress in Pennsylvania, and no weapon but a butcher-knife to protect her. (Both are, by the way, known to me.) Everywhere I see it, lack of law abiding and enforcement, and are we going to stand for a law that will compel our women and children to be left unprotected when every criminal every day shows plainer his contempt for all law? Let's get all real men together and *Step ON It.* That's what I say.—R. F. Cramer.

The second letter is from one of us who has twice faced the same situation our inquiring young man is facing. It is too long for this meeting, but it's too valuable and interesting not to be heard at a future Camp-Fire.

IT WILL be granted, I think, that it was, as he says, Barry Scobee's own story from the beginning. Here is his account of the facts back of his tale in this issue:

Fort Davis, Texas.

There is a true story of valor that, in a way of speaking, has been mine from the start. On May 5, 1916, eight privates and a sergeant of Troop A, 14th Cavalry, were attacked by 100 or more Mexican outlaws and bandits at a lonely and remote outpost on the Rio Grande in the Big Bend of Texas, at a place called Glenn Springs, or as often McKinney Springs, which consisted of a store and three houses. The affair is an epic of the United States soldier in action—or of any soldiers the world over, where lonely duty and fighting is to be done.

My story, "Company for the Night," is not an account of this, but is merely a fiction story suggested to me by the Glenn Springs affair. In this story I have not used the names of the men involved nor in any way tried to portray their characters, nor set out the actual scene of the fight. All that is something else entirely.

The story was mine from the first, as I say, for this reason. At that time I was the military man on the San Antonio *Daily Express.* Two or three times daily a number of us newspaper men, mostly from the Eastern cities and news bureaus, called on Major-General Frederick Funston at his offices, the Southern Department, Fort Sam Houston, at the edge of San Antonio, for the daily grist of news concerning Pershing in Mexico and other border affairs. So that the General would not have to be at some given place each night he arranged with us for the nine o'clock p. m. interview by agreeing that he or his chief-of-staff would call me at that hour at the editorial rooms of the *Express*—me because I was the only one at night regularly, among the correspondents, to be at a certain place with a known telephone number. The correspondents were to come there at that hour.

One Sunday night before nine o'clock either Funston or his chief-of-staff, then Major Malvern-Hill Barnum, called me and said that headquarters had just received a report about a fight in the Big Bend and would I please get the newspaper men together so that all of us could get the story at the same time. But the correspondents were scattered over the city, each one on duty having asked me as a favor to send out the stuff for them if anything broke. So that night I wrote a story which went immediately on to the streets in an extra and put briefer stories on the

wire for the Associated Press and the International News Service, and the next morning, I think, though I am not certain in my memory, for the United Press. Thus I had the privilege of giving to the world what I think is one of the finest stories of men fighting against odds that I have ever heard of. It was a "Little Alamo."

The story briefly was this: Unaware of the approaching horde of border outlaws bent upon plundering the little store and killing off the gringo soldiers, the American cavalrymen had turned in for the night in their underclothes, some in the two-room adobe house occupied by them and some in a tent near by. Two men were fully clothed and on guard. The bandits slipped up and surrounded them, without a sound to give them away, and at 11:30 o'clock opened fire at close range, that is, according to the official report, from thirty feet to two hundred yards.

The storekeeper, living in a house off to one side, being cut off from the soldiers, escaped to the hills. He was E. K. Ellis. He had a clerk, C. G. Compton, who had three small children. Compton lived in a house just behind the store. He took his smallest child and escaped, intending to return for the others, but did not get back until morning. One of his little boys was shot and killed in the night when he opened the door of the house to look out.

The roof of the adobe shack where the soldiers headquartered was roofed with metal which in turn was covered with a thatch of the waxy candelilla weed. After hours of fighting the Mexicans threw oiled rags and set the thatch on fire, driving the soldiers out. Those in their underclothing were badly burned. Only two men, who had got into the forage tent and cut holes to fire through, remained unscathed.

The sergeant in charge of the detachment was Charles E. Symth. His men were Joseph Birck, Stephen J. Coloe, Frank W. Croskem, William Cohen, Frank Defrees, Charles L. Dempsey, Hudson Rogers and Roscoe C. Tyree. They were ninety miles or so from the nearest railroad. They had no telephone connection. The next nearest soldiers were miles away. No settlement was in all the region from which substantial help could have been obtained. Their horses were quickly stolen. They fought in utter desperation, and left the shack and fled to the hills only when the fire drove them out.

After the house was fired, and at about daybreak, the bandits retired, with the loot of the store and garrison, and hurried on to another store several miles down the river, which was also looted. The bandits, or some of them at least, were soon followed into Mexico by Major Langhorne and two troops of the Eighth U. S. Cavalry. They penetrated 168 miles southward. No ambulance was taken along. Some bandits were killed; some brought back, tried in El Paso, and given long sentences. Sergeant Smyth was awarded a "Certificate of Merit" by the War Department, no commissioned officer witnessing his conduct to authorize the issuance of a medal of honor.

The report that the sergeant sat down and scribbled the next morning to his captain is a classic and is quoted in part:

"We have five men left in camp, 3 are known dead and 1 missing. I have in camp Private Birck, shot 3 times and Private Defrees is pretty badly burned. Private Croskem is O.K. Private Dempsey is O.K. (the men who fought from the forage tent) and I am O.K. except my feet are so badly burned that I can not walk hardly. Private Cohen is dead, Private Rogers is dead, Private Coloe is dead, and Tyree is missing. (He later got into camp, badly burned.) . . . Captain, I am staying instead of coming in as I want to be on the scene; also get even for killing our men. And, Captain, all the men stood the test great, not one flinched. Please send plenty of ammunition, both rifle and pistol. Also please send shoes and clothes. . . . Also please send plenty of lime water and linseed oil for burns. I am sending in the three dead bodies of our men and also a little boy that was killed. Well, as the truck is ready I will stop and send this letter. Please send out four pistols, as the men lost them, also one field belt, also plenty of bandages and other hospital supplies. All horses lost, also saddles, in fact everything but our rifles and my pistol."

It should be added that several bandits were killed in the night fight around the house. Many blotches of blood were found on the ground where the outlaws had been. I afterward had the satisfaction of visiting the scene of the fight.—Barry Scobee.

ANOTHER comrade joins in the discussion over disarming a man of a gun or knife. As Mr. Thorne was formerly wrestling instructor at the University of Michigan he should be qualified to speak.

Detroit, Michigan.

Was much interested in an article on how to disarm a gunman. This was published some time ago in "Camp-Fire." One writer told how easy it was to avoid being plugged, through use of certain holds; the other, an expert in firearms, denied such tactics would work. In my opinion, both were right and both were wrong. To digress a little here; got my authority from actual practise, some fifteen years of professional wrestling of all styles, from catch-as-catch-can, judo or jujutsu, to back-holds, which last I used among the Arkansas hill-billies and Kentucky mountaineers. Catch-as-catch-can wrestling is almost unknown among the hill-men of these States and is called "just wollering around."

The writer who told how to disarm a gunman is away off his method. Any judo expert, police instructor or wrestler would laugh at his tactics. The gun of an opponent should be jerked sideways, never up or down. Common mathematics shows this the only proper method, whether against gun or knife. Jerking a weapon up or down, it has to clear the entire length of your body to place you in

safety, while but a few inches of a side twist or push will clear yourself.

Space will not permit me to tell of the many different leverage-grips that can be used These grips are absolutely workable safety-guards—if you are quick, strong and determined, and if—you have an opening to apply them.

In spite of the gun-experts' denial, these holds can be, and are, used successfully Should a gunman expect such tactics he could easily prevent them but it would be a sole question of *timing, quickness* and *openings*. Both men would have an "ace in the hole" with the odds, however, on the holder of the gun or knife. The user of twisting or pushing grips would have a tremendous leverage of both hands against his opponent's one.

I could draw most holds, but knowing space limitations, will close saying, "I hope no reader puts either theory to a test. One might have a broken arm or wrist and the other a leaky midsection."—CLIFFORD THORNE.

A FEW words from Charles Gilson concerning the locale of his story in this issue. We've followed Major Gilson's suggestion and renamed the city which was called Kaifong in the original manuscript, so that the map is now as purely imaginary as a map can well be.

In regard to the map, I will make one and send it to you this week, though there may be some difficulty about it, as most of the places are imaginary. In my own opinion—which you may take for what it is worth—I'm rather against a map in this particular case; for the story is a farce, and I do not myself consider the locality of very much importance. Besides, it so happens that any map I draw will have to be made up out of my head, and there are very few places mentioned. However I will have a shot at it, in case you want to use it, and will—as I have said—send it along as soon as I can find time to do it.—CHARLES GILSON.

P.S.—Since writing the enclosed, I've gone into the matter, and find the greatest difficulty in making a map. From the story the Taoist temple appears to be a considerable distance from Kaifong, and the map would have to be the greater part of the province of Shantung. May I suggest that the place Kaifong is altered to Kweifong, for the simple reason that there happens to be no such place. I think it really would be wiser to have all the places imaginary, except such large and well known features as the Hwang-ho and the Grand Canal. The incident is supposed to take place somewhere on the borders of Shansi and Shantung; and I should let it go at that. This is not laziness on my part, but a feeling that geographical falsehoods are best left not committed to paper. If I draw you a true map, and put in an important place, such as this particular city appears to be, where it does not actually exist, I do not appear to be doing very much good to my story.

If you don't agree with me, no doubt you will have a map made in your own office. A large scale map of China will show you that the Grand Canal crosses the Hwang-ho near the city of Tungchang. This is somewhere about where the imaginary city ought to be; and I think it ought to be called Kweifong, if there is a map, as there is a Kaifong several miles to the south. Chinese proper names recur over and over again.

If the Taoist temple is shown on the map, it should be on the opposite side of the river to the city, and several miles away.

One of my main difficulties is this: if one draws a map, and puts in a lot of real places, one will have an imaginary temple where probably one doesn't exist; one of your readers might write and say so. Much better, it seems to me, to make it clear that all this happened in a certain part of China, and leave it at that.—C. G.

DIVING as deep as 1922 into our cache we emerge with a letter on our old friends the San Blas. If any proper names are spelled incorrectly, it is due to our ignorance and to certain qualities in Mr. Wilcox's handwriting that put him in a class with myself:

Las Minas, Panama.

An experience of eight years in the "out-of-the-way places" of Panama may permit a word of interest in reference to the San Blas or, correctly, the Cuira Indians and the "closed" country.

Verrill's statement is the clearest and most authentic I have ever seen. The real "closed" country lies between the Andes and the Chinino Mountains. The only access is through the Chucunaque and Bayano Rivers. The eastern boundary of forbidden limits, beyond which it is unsafe to go, is the Membrulo River, a tributary of the Chucunaque. The western boundary is a point of the Bayano River, known as Canita, situated about ten miles above the native village of El Llano.

The Indians come down the Chucunaque and Bayano Rivers in cedar canoes. These canoes are beautifully hewn and modeled for river work and will carry from one to two tons of produce.

On the Chucunaque they seldom, if ever, go below Ya Visa. Here they dispose of their produce to traders who make regular trips from Panama City to Ya Visa in gasoline boats. On the Bayano River the canoes go as far down as the mouth of the Mamoni River. Here the Indians keep sailing boats called *bougoes*. These crafts are hollowed out from large trees and are seaworthy in open waters of the bay and capable of carrying from seven to eighteen tons. From the canoe the produce is reloaded into the *bougoes* and a crew chosen from their number transports it to Panama, where it is sold.

In number, the flotilla of river canoes seldom

exceeds ten or twelve. A headman who speaks Spanish conducts all negotiations. The rest of the Indians are able to converse only in their own language and I have never seen any other who could talk with them in their native tongue.

At a logging camp I had, a short distance above Jesus Maria on the Bayano River, I maintained a commissary to supply the needs of my workmen and engaged in trading with the Indians for supplies and became much interested in them. This intercourse led to an invitation to visit their country. Considered seriously taking the trip, but was unable to spare the time, thirty days, which they told me would be required to go and come.

Later on I went twice to the headwaters of the Mague River, a tributary of the Bayano. The first time I met no Indians, but the second time I was stopped by them before reaching the mouth of the Mague. Fortunately the spokesman was an Indian I had met and I explained to him the object of my trip and my proposed destination. After some palaver with his fellows, they permitted me to go on.

No Indians live on the Mague. It is my belief that no one has ever gone through the "closed" country. Have heard of several claims, but they were empty boasts.

The lure of the forbidden has attracted several whom I have met, but in every case they were met by the Indians and turned back with a warning not to come again. In my opinion, a white man would fare better than a native in such a venture, but a return after a warning would be hazardous.

Four natives from a little "campo" on the Bayano ventured over the forbidden line in search of "balata." They were met by the Indians and conducted out with warnings not to return. The following year they again attempted it. About a month after they left their native town an Indian messenger presented to the headman of the *campo* a small cedar box, which was opened in my presence. It contained four thumbs from the right hand, neatly packed. There was no writing enclosed to denote its origin and there was no need of any.

While the natural deduction from this tale would be that the Ama are savage and troublesome, it is quite the contrary. They are affable and friendly to meet if you can overcome their natural reserve and suspicion of the outsider.

Among themselves they are peaceable and industrious. Only when the forbidden limits have been encroached upon have I heard of any violence and then only after a warning which would permit a safe exit.

In appearance they are not at all ferocious. In stature they average only a trifle over five feet in height, though well proportioned and clean limbed.

It is a temptation to write more in detail on a subject of much interest to me, but I will mention only one thing which I think Verrill didn't cover; with all their native love of color and finery, it is a strange fact that they never use bird plumage or feathers for personal adornment, in spite of the fact that Panama forests are full of birds of rare and gorgeous beauty.

Personally I respect their wish to keep to themselves as an act of wisdom, for unfortunately civilization seems to introduce among the aborigines more of its vices than benefits.—ALBERT LORD WILCOX.

SOMETHING from Hugh Pendexter in connection with the real facts back of his story in this issue:

Norway, Maine.

Professor Thomas J. Dimsdale in his "The Vigilantes of Montana" says the bad blood between Henry Plummer and his old partner in crime, Jack Cleveland, was caused by Cleveland's jealousy when they were rivals for a young woman's hand. Plummer met Cleveland after missing the down-river boat at Fort Benton. He had contemplated for a long time a return to the States. Returning to the diggings, he found Cleveland at Gold Creek and the two agreed to pass the winter at Sun River Farm. Jealousy spoiled their friendship, yet they traveled to Bannack together. Dimsdale says Bannack held more desperadoes and lawless characters during that winter of 1862-'63 than any other mining camp of the same size. The two men were broke when they reached Bannack, but Cleveland took a short ride and returned with funds. Dimsdale credits Cleveland with the murder of George Evans on Buffalo creek, eight miles from Bannack. Granville Stuart in his "Forty Years on the Frontier" has the name of this victim, "George Edwards."

According to Dimdsale, Plummer mortally wounded Cleveland in Goodrich's saloon after Cleveland had demanded money of Jeff Perkins and Perkins had insisted he had paid it. Ives and Charlie Reeves escorted Plummer to his cabin after this affair.

Stuart says Lou P. Smith and "Buz" Caven were the two best fiddlers in the camp.

The affair between Ives and George Carrhart is as described in the story. Dimsdale says one of Carrhart's shots "flashed right in Ives' face but did no damage." The same poor marksmanship characterized Plummer's shooting of Cleveland, according to Dimsdale. "Plummer's first shot lodged in a beam overhead. The second struck him (Cleveland) below the belt. The third hit him a little above the heart. The next entered the eye and lodged in his head." And the fifth missed entirely and nearly killed a citizen. Cleveland lived three hours, and none dared carry him from the saloon until Hank Crawford risked Plummer's anger by removing him. In these various shootings two facts seem to stand out: a man stood a lot of killing, and the desperadoes often were rotten shots.

Stuart "always suspected" that Reeves and "Whisky Bill" Graves murdered Edwards. Stuart stresses the fact that "no steps were taken to do

more than regulate affairs relating strictly to mining matters. Every man was expected to take care of himself."

Ives was twenty-five years old at the time of my story. He had blue eyes and light hair and, unlike many of his associates, had enjoyed all the privileges that come to a youth of a highly respectable and well-to-do family. Dimsdale describes Carrhart as a remarkably handsome man, well educated and with the manners of a gentleman. Whisky was his undoing and sent him with the riffraff of the vicious. He was accidently killed while sleeping off a debauch in Skinner's saloon. In the same room Dick Sap and George Banefield, a gambler, were playing poker. Sap caught Banefield stealing a card. The gambler jumped to his feet. Sap was unarmed, but a friend passed him a revolver. Here is another example of wretched shooting. They emptied their weapons, neither being hit. But Buz Caven's dog, "Toodles," sleeping under the table, was killed, hit by three bullets, and Carrhart, asleep, was fatally shot through the bowels. Bill Moore and Charlie Reeves accused Sap of killing Carrhart, and Moore fired twice, at close range, at Sap's head, and missed.

Plummer was credited with being one of the quickest men on the draw to be found in the mountains. As a result of his "hunting" Hank Crawford, because the latter removed Cleveland from Goodrich's saloon, he was shot in the right arm by Crawford. The bullet traveled down the arm and lodged in the wrist, where it was found after he was hanged, "brightend by the constant friction of the joint," as the historian puts it. As a result of this wound Plummer practised assiduously drawing and shooting with his left hand. With the exception of Ives, who was, Dimsdale says, "absolutely fearless," and a few others, the large band of murderers who infested early Montana were rank cowards once they found they did not possess the advantage.—PENDEXTER.

AN ITEM for our gun fans, sent in by one of us who is city editor of the Mobile *Register* and has found the testimony of some other Camp-Fire comrades useful in his work:

Mobile, Alabama.

Principally because there have been one or two letters which mentioned the fact that an old-time gunman occasionally paused not on the order of his methods but snap shot his revolver *through the holster from the hip,* I'm enclosing this clipping. It was published December 11; when it came under my eye I was rather dubious about the creditability of the facts but was able to reconcile the story upon recalling mention in *Adventure* of the feat.—DORIAN STOUT

The clipping follows:

A gun duel staged with a mounted officer who once was a cowboy may result fatally for Joe F. Bowles, Mobile and Ohio railroad special officer, who lies critically wounded in city hospital. The battle was fought on the streets of Prichard yesterday morning and according to Gus Dixon, chief of police there, was a climax to Bowles' attempt to shoot up the town. Bowles, reported in a grave condition, was no better last night.

Bowles was wounded in the hip by Special Officer Joe Aaron, who, Chief Dixon reported, retaliated with a snap-shot when Bowles tried to shoot him off his horse. Aaron, surprized, grasped his revolver and fired through the holster, without withdrawing the weapon, and Bowles collapsed.

OUR customary biographical sketch to let you get acquainted with the men who write our stories. This time it's Clements Ripley.

There is a theory that you can tell what manner of man a person is by what he does with his leisure time. Hobbies, pastimes, avocations, "outside interests," these all throw an illuminating light on the "real" man. Clements Ripley spends his play-time in hunting, fishing, mountain-climbing, trap-shooting, prospecting and exploring, camping, sailing a small boat. He has cruised along the coast of New England, climbed difficult peaks around Mt. Tacoma in Washington—some of these places had been untouched until he reached them—has camped along Puget Sound, has explored the fiords of British Columbia. He has a first-hand knowledge of lumber-camps, sawmills, and all that goes with the lumber business in the Pacific Northwest; and knows a good deal of sailor life, the old windjammer days, and Alaska.

His experience in the Army interested him in historical matters and in world psychology, ancient and modern. He has both read and written a good deal along this line. At present he is very much interested in the South, old and new, especially the little known Low Country of South Carolina.

Mr. Ripley was born at Tacoma, Washington, in 1892. His early life was divided between his father's lumber business in Washington and going to school in New England. He was graduated from Yale in 1916, and entered the Army, receiving a commission as Second Lieutenant, Regular Army, in November of that year. He served with the artillery, on the border at Fort Bliss, Texas, and later at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for four years. In November, 1920, he left the service and since then has lived in North Carolina, raising peaches and writing.

In December, 1922, we published a story of his, "An Unpleasant Episode," and during the four years since then he has been a frequent contributor to our magazine.— J. M. C.

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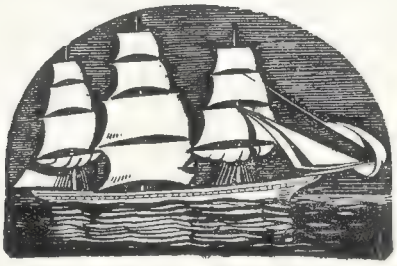


Questions and Answers

Accurate Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere

Books you can Believe

Verdicts by Experts on the Authenticity of Current Non-Fiction

Straight Goods

Reports on Tests by Our Experts of Outdoor Equipment and Commodities

Adventure's Travel Association

A Service Organization with Stations and Experts all over the World

Old Songs that Men have Sung

Collecting and Discussing Old Songs still Living among the People

R. C. M. P.

GENERAL qualifications for enlistment in the "Mounties" and some interesting information about the service. Good chances for promotion.

Request:—"I am very much interested in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and would appreciate it if you would kindly answer a few questions.

1. What are the qualifications for admittance to the Mounted?
2. What is the pay?
3. Are there much chances for advancement?
4. Who do I write to for particulars?
5. What is the uniform?
6. What are the arms?
7. Are Mounties out six and seven months at a time after their man?"—C. W. CROSLAND, French Camp, Miss.

Reply, by Mr. Lee:—I will endeavor to answer your questions in order:

1. General qualifications required for enlistment in the R. C. M. P. are that the applicant be an unmarried British subject, between the ages of 18 and

32; at least 5 feet 8 inches tall; weight not more than 175 pounds, and be of good health and physique. An applicant is expected to be able to ride and know something of the care of horses. He must also furnish character references.

2. Pay for constables starts at $2 per day; corporals receive $2.50 and sergeants $3, all, of course, with uniform and maintenance.

3. I think the chances for advancement are as good in the R. C. M. Police as in any other organization of similar character. Nearly all the officers are from the ranks.

4. Write to the Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ottawa, Canada.

5. Dress uniform consists of Stetson hat in summer, fur cap in winter, red tunic with blue facings, dark blue riding breeches with two-inch yellow stripe, riding boots and spurs, dark blue pea-jacket in spring and fall, and short fur coat in winter. Service uniform consists of a tan jacket with collar and blue necktie in place of the red "serge," and a peaked service cap in place of the Stetson. Stable uniform consists of tan tunic and pants and a red touque. The underclothing supplied is of good quality.

6. Service British .303 Lee-Enfield rifles, or short Lee-Enfield carbines, and regulation Colt's .45 revolvers. Officers carry swords, and lances are used for dress and other ceremonial parades.

7. Under exceptional circumstances, yes, but men sent on such missions are always men of long service in the police and such duty is generally in the Arctic regions where the traveling is done by sled in winter and canoe or whale-boat in summer, accounting for the length of the patrol.

Our Question and Answer service is free, but our experts can not reply to queries that are not accompanied by self-addressd envelope and stamp—not attached.

New Mexico

GOOD general information on the cost of living in the Southwest—but this reader would have got much better service if she had made her questions specific.

Request:—"We want to move to New Mexico, buy land and build a home but we need a great deal of advice and so I am going to trouble you for full information and hints of value.

How much capital would we need? What would it cost to build a five-room bungalow? Is labor high or scarce? Are gas and electricity available near Albuquerque (where we wish to locate)?

How much is land an acre? Can we buy from the Government? Is there a limit and can we have plenty of time to pay for it? Is the land irrigated?

Can a man find daily work in or near Albuquerque; enough to make a decent living?

What would be the most profitable way to make a living on our land? Farming? Trapping? Whatever it is please tell us the probable cost of necessary implements, tools, etc.

Are wild game and fish plentiful? Is there any restriction?"—MRS. VICTOR JONES, Columbus, Ohio.

Reply, by Mr. H. P. Robinson—I have your letter of January 20th stating that you want to come to New Mexico, buy land and build a home. You ask how much capital will be needed, what it would cost to build a five-room bungalow and a good many other questions which are very hard to answer when you consider the size of the State, over 122,000 square miles, and diverse conditions under which you would be in the various parts.

The cost of a five-room bungalow would depend entirely upon the kind of a house you were building, whether frame, adobe, brick, or other construction. It might be anywhere from $3,000 to $6,000 for the building and extra for the lot. Lots would vary anywhere from $200 to a couple of thousand, according to the location, so that the answer would be that the cost of a house out here would be very near to what it would be in Columbus, Ohio.

Fairly plentiful common labor, usually in the native or Mexican population, is cheap but skilled labor is high and union prices prevail.

Albuquerque has both gas and electricity, gas throughout most of the city and electricity almost any place in a radius of several miles from town.

Agricultural land will vary in price. Take it nearer the city, such land as would be in condition to raise crops would vary according to the improvements on it from $100 up. No irrigated land can be bought from the government and very little land in the State can be cultivated without irrigation.

I enclose several printed leaflets, one on New Mexico and one on public lands. From these you can get a fairly good idea.

You ask if a man could get daily work in or near Albuquerque. The answer depends upon the kind of work he is willing to do or capable of doing. If he has a trade and gets in the union he can make good money. If he had no trade and is a common laborer the wages will be low as there is a considerable amount of native or Mexcian population who are day laborers and who will work from $2.00 to $3.00 per day.

You ask what would be the most profitable way to make a living on your land. I would say either farming or in poultry business. There is practically no trapping in the State. I enclose another leaflet on the game laws which will give you a little idea. This will also tell you about the wild game and fish and the seasons in which it can be hunted. All game is protected and the hunting season is limited.

I will ask the Chamber of Commerce to send you some additional printed matter and if after you read this you have other specific questions, I will be glad to write you again.

Tigers

SOME comparisons as to fierceness and beauty between Manchurian and Royal Bengal tigers. And how they may be hunted.

Request:—"May I bother you to ask some questions in regard to Manchurian tigers? Are they larger than Royal Bengals? Are they as fierce and beautiful? Is it possible to hunt them from the backs of Bactrian camels? Does hunting them afford much sport? What type of rifle is best to use? Would there be much chance of finding many Manchurian tigers were one to go on a hunt?"—Very truly yours, RALPH ROBINSON, Indianapolis, Ind.

Reply, by Dr. Whymant:—The Manchurian tiger is by no means as large as the Royal Bengal, which is, I believe, the biggest tiger in the world. The tigers in Manchuria are certainly very fierce and they are in marking very much the same as tigers elsewhere. They can be hunted, if necessary, from the backs of Bactrian camels. This hunting draws quite a number of sportsmen every year, and any one who has hunted them will tell you that the ordinary sporting rifle can not be bettered. As to the chance of finding many of them, that would depend on the neighborhood. There are still plenty of them in the country, too many for the peace of mind for the lonely traveler!

Our Question and Answer service is free, but our experts can not reply to queries that are not accompanied by self-addressed envelope and stamp—not attached.

Army

WHO knows the origin of this Polish decoration which was seen on the uniform of a first sergeant on the streets of Antwerp?

Request:—"Seeing the Lieutenant's name as an authority on Army matters, I am taking the liberty of asking a question. If it is out of the Lieutenant's field I apologize.

I served in the Army during and after the war. After the Armistice went to Poland with the American Polish Relief Expedition under the command of Col. Harry Gilchrist, remaining until late in 1920.

Would like to know if there was any ribbon authorized for members of this expedition. Several enlisted men who came back earlier, whom I met in Antwerp, were wearing some sort of ribbon. I forget the colors. A first sergeant was among them."—CORP. C. MUDGET, U. S. S. *Colorado,* San Pedro, Calif.

Reply, by Lieut. Townsend:—I am sorry that the answer to your letter in reference to decorations for the members of the American Typhus Expedition in Poland in 1919-20 has been so long delayed. I could find no reference in War Department publications to any medal or ribbon having been awarded to the members of this expedition. However, to be certain, I got in touch with your former commanding officer, Colonel H. L. Gilchrist, Medical Corps, U. S. A., and today received a letter from him stating that no decorations have been authorized for this service. He also says that in a few cases Polish decorations were given to individual members of the expedition for special meritorious services and that these were distributed in Poland. Possibly the ribbons you saw in Antwerp represented these Polish decorations but more likely they were unauthorized. A good many unauthorized decorations of various kinds were worn immediately after the war.

You may be interested to know that Colonel Gilchrist under whom you served in Poland is now connected with the Medical Research Division of the Chemical Warfare Service and is stationed at Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland.

Great Smokies

A GOOD place for a college professor and an ex-officer of Intelligence in the French Army to become intimately acquainted with American types.

Request:—"I am venturing to write to ask you for a bit of advice, for the good reason that I have long been familiar with your book, 'Our Southern Highlanders,' and have read other things of yours, with enjoyment and profit.

Here's the situation:

I am reasonably familiar with a considerable part of the North Carolina mountain region, having tramped all over the Mitchell, Craggy, Pisgah, and Balsam ridges, and fished in most of the streams from Asheville to Murphy, and in the country between Brevard and Lake Toxaway. Since I was twelve years old, I have 'hung around' with mountain folk, and have never had any difficulty getting along with them, and getting them to accept me as a desirable member of society from their point of view.

A friend and myself—my friend being an ex-offiver of Intelligence in the French Army, who wants to get intimately acquainted with some of our 'original' American types—wish to take a tramp from three weeks to a month in duration, through the region more or less marked by the line between N. C. and Tennessee, with particular reference to the Great Smokies. Both of us are seasoned campers, so we shall not have any difficulties of that sort—not even with cooking, I trust! But as I am not familiar with the more western portion of the mountains, and especially the Smokies, I am writing to ask if you will not be good enough to suggest to us

an itinerary that will enable us to see the most interesting and less settled neighborhoods. If you would figure about how much ground a couple of experienced trampers could cover in leisurely enough fashion—so as not to miss anything of value—in about three weeks or a month, and would fix the starting point somewhere toward the north end of the route, we should be greatly obliged. We have at hand the geological survey topographical maps, and you can give us references to them, if you wish.

Another point: Would it be practical, and desirable, on such a trip, for us to try to beg, borrow or steal some sort of pack animal to carry the necessary outfit; or do you advise us to tote it on our own backs, as less bother? If you think a pack animal useful and not too much trouble, have you any notion of where we might hire one for the trip, as we naturally would not want to buy a horse or mule for so short a journey.

Thanking you for any information you may care to give us out of your invaluable first-hand knowledge of the country we want to see."—James C. Bardin, University, Va.

Reply, by Mr. Kephart:—It is a pleasure to give you a few points on mountaineering in this part of the country. But I will begin by saying that it would be an arduous task to follow the Smoky divide in winter. Of course, you might have pleasant weather, in which case you would have no great difficulty except in the sawtooth range between Mt. Collins and Mt. Guyot, which you have already read about in my book "Our Southern Highlanders," pp. 58-66. But snow might make this and one or two other parts of the divide impassable.

Travel in the upper zone of the Smokies is more difficult now than it was in 1912 when I wrote that description. This is so because the lumbermen have cut over the whole territory west of Clingman Dome, leaving tree-tops everywhere, and the undergrowth that has sprung up on the devastated region is thicker than hair on a dog's back. Many of the old trails are obliterated. East of Clingman the country is still primeval forest.

It is impossible to take a pack animal on such a trip. Even where there are trails, the going is too rugged for a mule in many places east of Clingman. From Siler's Bald west to the Tennessee river you could take a horse or mule all right, along the crest of the divide, as this trail still remains, and there are no knife-edges nor saw-teeth.

At any time between April 1st and mid-November you could average twelve miles a day along the divide, carrying 10-60-lb. packs, without hurrying overmuch. You would have to carry everything you needed for the trip, as there are no supply stations. The upper mountains are quite uninhabited.

This rate of travel assumes that you are not delayed by fog (clouds) or storms. If you take no guide, you may as well count on straying off on the wrong ridge at times and having to back-track or else go down to the settlements and change your plan. In various places the highest ridge and apparently right course is not the divide at all. And bear in mind that you will travel for miles where there are no lookouts, unless you climb a tree. It is mostly black spruce and balsam from Guyot to Clingman, and cut-over hardwoods with dense new thicket to the west of Clingman.

If you can delay your trip until spring, you will have a bully time. I do not know any mountains more interesting than the Smokies when the trees and shrubs are in leaf. You know how varied the flora is, I suppose.

In spring, if I had a month, I would start where the Smokies begin, at the gorge of the Pigeon River, follow the divide to the Hughes Ridge, there turn south along the ridge to the Big Bald, descend from it to the Raven prong of the Lufty River, spend two or three days among the Indians (Cherokees) thereabouts and at Cherokee; then go back up the Bradley fork to Porter Gap, follow the divide again, over Collins, Clingman, Siler's Bald, Thunderhead, Gregory Bald, to the big dam on the state line at Tapoco, on the Tennessee River. Then I would take on supplies and follow the Unaka divide to the Hiwassee on the Georgia line, making side trips to the Little Santeetlah and Snowbird and into Hanging Dog.

By this time you would have seen the best (and some of the worst) of the Smokies, and would have hobnobbed with primitive people of both races, white and red. And you would be prepared to write a true story of adventure that would be good reading.

Whatever time you had left could be spent to advantage in the comparatively civilized country of the Blue Ridge, from Highlands to Toxaway and the Pisgah National Forest. Change of grub would go good by that time and you would once more enjoy civilized society.

I will be glad to give further details if you desire them. Wishing you the best of luck, I close.

Yet, at the last moment, it occurs to me that perhaps your idea of a winter trip might have been suggested by the chance of a little bear hunting. The bears are there, all right; but they generally begin to hole-up about Christmas, in the Smokies.

British Columbia

ALMOST unlimited land for homesteaders. If you wish to raise sheep you can probably get grazing rights on more than the usual allotment of one hundred and sixty acres.

Request:—"I am very anxious to get some facts about British Columbia.

I am an American citizen and am desirous of homesteading in British Columbia if that is possible. I should like to go in for sheep raising if that is at all practical and would like to know how much land, if any, can be homesteaded, what part of the

country is best and the smallest amount of capital that it would be possible to start in with.

I would appreciate any information as to climate, what it would be necessary to bring out and if farming would be a better bet. In fact any information that you will volunteer will be a great favor. —C. V. Ingleright, Mishawaka, Ind.

Reply, by Mr. Plowden:—Certainly an American can homestead out here. Why not? There is almost unlimited land vacant, very suitable for sheep raising. The ordinary acreage for one prescription is 160, but you can get extra for grazing rights. Write Bureau of Information, Victoria, B. C. and they will send you maps and all particulars. Tell them what you propose doing. I suggest land near line of P. C. E. Railway and you had better ask for particulars of this section. Better combine with mixed farming. I think the climate is ideal. You get 160 acres *free* so capital depends upon what stock you prefer buying and what sort of a house you put up. I enclose a cutting that will help you a lot. When you get the maps etc. and have made up your mind, write me again for any help I can give. I should bring out as little as possible as it is cheaper to buy here and avoid the duty. You will be assured of a hearty welcome and I wish you all luck.

Rifles

WHAT were the principal differences between the rifles carried by the regular Army in the recent war and those carried by the drafted men?

Request:—"Would you kindly give me some information regarding a rifle which I bought from Bannerman's? It is an Army rifle with the following marks on barrel over chamber:

U. S.
Model 1917
Eddystone
47546

It shoots the regulation Springfield .30, 1906, and is sighted to 1900 yds. Bannerman's claim this rifle was one of the makes used by the A. E. F. during the world war. How does this rifle compare with the Springfield?

What does the term "express" rifle mean?

Does it refer to some particular make of rifle?

And does it also concern the style of ammunition used?"—George H. Shepherd, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Salem, Ore., Jan. 2, 1927.

Reply, by Mr. Donegan Wiggins:—Bannerman's are correct in saying the rifle you purchased was one of the models used by the A. E. F., the other one in most general use, principally by regulars and volunteers being the Springfield, and the one like yours; the Model 1917 or Enfield, as we called it, being used by the National Army or drafted men.

There were of course exceptions to each rule, but in the main it's correct. The Model 1917 rifles are now being held in reserve by the Government, and some have been sold, both to the firm of Bannerman, and some to the Mexican government some years since, if newspaper reports are correct that appeared at the time.

The Model 1917 was a clumsy arm, it cooked on the closing motion, and was heavier than the Springfield, hence was very unpopular. But it had its sight where it belonged, and held seven cartridges if needed, and had a sort of pistol grip, all of which features appealed to me greatly. I drilled with one, but as a Machine Gun Mechanic would never have had to carry one into action.

I consider them a perfectly reliable rifle, but prefer the Springfield, myself.

The term "express" rifle means one throwing its bullet very fast, and is an English term.

The new bolt action Remington is known as the "express," and is the only one so known in the United States, as far as I know.

The ammunition comes under the same heading; fast bullets, and made here by the UMC Co. Remington owns that firm, you know, of course.

Our Question and Answer service is free, but our experts can not reply to queries that are not accompanied by self-addressed envelope and stamp—not attached.

Gold

A COUPLE of stories of nuggets lost years ago that might be worth looking for. Who knows whether they have ever been found?

Request:—"Picked up an old copy of *Adventure* issued about two years ago. Read of some one who had gathered about one hundred pounds of gold nuggets. Hid them somewhere in the hills and was never able to find them again. Also of a prospector who panned about one thousand dollars in an hour and who also was unable to again find the placer.

Have often wondered if any of these stories of the old prospectors are true. I heard many during my last summer's stay in the West. I am returning to Idaho next summer. A party of four. We have all prowled the hills. Expect to spend most of the time prospecting again.

Of course we are all little boys when it comes to looking for lost treasure and the anticipation of a big find always takes away some of the tough old grind.

So if you know of any of these stories that you are sure are true and can give me any general directions and localities I would appreciate it very much."—N. Jay Barnebee, Detroit, Mich.

Reply, by Mr. Harriman:—A Frenchman prospecting in the mountains near the headwaters of the Yuba River, did gather a big lot of nuggets,

what he claimed was a hundred pounds, carried it on his shoulder in a sack until he was lost and tired out, then buried it at the foot of a tree and hunted each year of his life, after that, without ever finding it. A friend of mine knew him and handled the three nuggets the old man brought out in his pockets and saw a jeweler pay him $108 for the three.

Ad Wolff panned one thousand dollars at one trial, left his camping outfit to mark the spot and ran down to low ground, crazy over his luck. He went back and the outfit was gone, probably stolen by an Indian, and he hunted every summer for sixteen years, without locating that place again. I was told this by his nephew who helped Ad search several times. He had come down Seesash or Seecesh Creek, toward Salmon River, Idaho.

Knowing both narrators intimately, I do not doubt either story.

Good luck to you. I hope you find where Ad Wolff got his gold and send me a nugget for a pocket-piece.

Our Experts—They have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

They will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections, subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assume any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible.

The full list of experts will appear in the next issue. Besides geographical sections covering practically all of the world they handle the following topics: Salt and Fresh Water Fishing, Small Boating, Canoeing, Yachting, Motor Boating, Motor Camping, Motor Vehicles, All Shotguns, All Rifles, Edged Weapons, Firearms, Archery, First Aid on the Trail, Health Building Outdoors, Hiking, Camp Cooking, Mining and Prospecting, Forestry in the United States, Tropical Forestry, Railroading in the U. S., Mexico and Canada, Aviation, Army Matters, Navy Matters, State Police, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Horses, Dogs, Photography, Linguistics and Ethnology, American Anthropology North of the Panama Canal, Herpetology, Entomology, Ornithology, Taxidermy, Stamps, Coins and Medals, Radio, Track, Tennis, Basketball, Bicycling, Swimming, Skating, Skiing and Snow-shoeing, Hockey, Boxing.

CAMP-FIRE BUTTONS—Designed to indicate the common interest which is the only requisite for membership in Camp-Fire and to enable members to recognize each other when they meet in far places or at home. Enameled in dark colors representing earth, sea and sky, and bears the numeral 71—the sum of the letters of the word Camp-Fire valued according to position in the alphabet. Exact size shown. Twenty-five cents, post-paid, anywhere. When sending for the button enclose a strong, self-addressed *un*stamped envelope. If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Butterick Publishing Company, *not* to any individual.

FORWARDING MAIL—This office, assuming no responsibility, will be glad to act as a forwarding address for its readers or to hold mail till called for, provided necessary postage is supplied.

IDENTIFICATION CARDS—Free to any reader. Just send us (1) your name and address, (2) name and address of party to be notified, (3) a stamped and self-addressed return envelope. Each card bears this inscription, printed in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Japanese: "In case of death or serious emergency to bearer, address serial number of this card, care of *Adventure*, New York, stating full particulars, and friends will be notified."

In our office, under each serial number, will be registered the name of bearer and of one or two friends, with permanent address of each. No name appears on the card. Letters will be forwarded to friend, unopened by us. Names and addresses treated as confidential. We assume no other obligations. Cards not for business identification. Cards furnished free *provided stamped and addressed envelope accompanies application.* We reserve the right to use our own discretion in all matters pertaining to these cards.

METAL CARDS—For twenty-five cents we will send you *post-paid*, the same card in aluminum composition, perforated at each end. Enclose a self-addressed return envelope, but no postage. Twenty-five cents covers everything. Please make out check or money order to the Butterick Publishing Company.

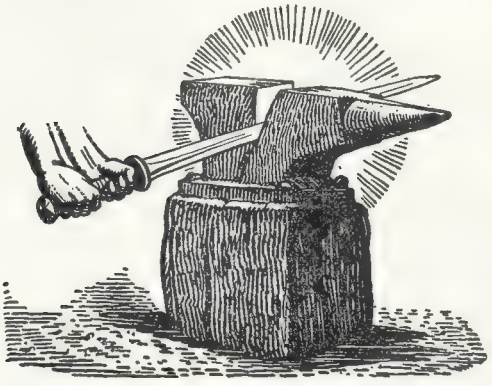
STRAIGHT GOODS—This department has been omitted from this issue in order to give space to "A. T. A."

BOOKS YOU CAN BELIEVE—Verdicts of our experts on non-fiction books appear in alternate issues.

LOST TRAILS—This department for finding missing friends and relatives is printed only in alternate issues.

STRAIGHT GOODS

A Report on Tests by Our Experts of Outdoor Equipment and Commodities.



Open Season

LAST month the fishing enthusiasts had their first notes from our Ask Adventure experts John B. Thompson (Ozark Ripley) and Hapsburg Liebe. In this issue we are giving more reports from them on products they have tested and approved. There's also an interesting report from Donegan Wiggins telling about a new type of ammunition for automatic pistols. Reprints of reports on other products published in previous issues will be sent on request. Don't forget to enclose the two-cent stamp for postage.

If the products described in "STRAIGHT GOODS" are not carried at your local store the manufacturers will be glad to give you further information if you write saying you have been referred to them by *Adventure.*

Report of Tests

PFLUEGER SUPREME LEVEL-WIND ANTI-BACKLASH REEL—Enterprise Mfg. Company, Akron, O. It chances that I have had a Pflueger reel for some three or four years, and therefore had considerable experience with this product before I received the new reel for Straight Goods test. After giving it the very hardest kind of service, I consider it just about the last word in reels of its size, which is ample for any fresh-water fishing.

The features that will most recommend it to both expert and novice are: Even the gears may be oiled without removing a single screw; it has an anti-backlash device that is easily adjusted to any particular length or strength of cast, or any weight of bait; the level-wind apparatus is absolutely correct and dependable; the spiral-toothed gears, which really fit, are made of the best material; perfectly balanced spool, and two-handled crank; it has a tension oil-cup for keeping end-play out of the spool. All wearing surfaces are practically wear-proof. Seems built like a watch, a very handsome little piece of machinery, and as durable as it is handsome. It is officially approved.—HAPSBURG LIEBE.

NIPIGON LINE DRESSING—The Transferoid Company, Owatonna, Minn. Everybody should use a line dressing of this kind. It makes the fly line pliable and seals up all cracks and pores so that casting with the dressing on is a much easier matter than when none is used. A line treated with this dressing does not become water-soaked and difficult to pick up. I found it especially useful when trying it out with floating bass and trout flies; there seemed less of the usual drag on a fly than before, and when casting upstream in swift water I had no difficulty in keeping line, fly and leader from sinking. I noted, too, that bait-casting lines treated with Nipigon Line Dressing, especially the high-grade, soft-dressed lines, did not lose their speed by soaking up water. The dressing is applied by drawing the line first through a piece of flannel saturated with it and then wiping the line clean with a cotton cloth. It is officially approved.—JOHN B. THOMPSON (Ozark Ripley).

UMC OIL-PROOF AMMUNITION FOR AUTOMATIC PISTOLS—Remington Arms Company, 25 Broadway, New York City.

Two makes of efficient oil-proof ammunition for automatic pistols are today available, the UMC and the U. S. The tests reported here were made with UMC.

A common source of failure in the self-loading, semi-automatic pistols—the ones commonly called "automatic"—is ammunition affected by the oil from the mechanism of the pistol which seeps through the crimp of primer and bullet and attacks the explosive in the cartridge. This leads to improper combustion of the charge, poor burning of the powder or only partial combustion, which fails to give pressure enough to operate the pistol perfectly, and a "jam" as we call it, results.

Today, we can secure ammunition that has removed the oil-seepage danger. I soaked a 380 UMC oil-proof cartridge for over a week in hot oil, and when I placed it in my Remington pistol and fired, it functioned perfectly.

To secure perfect action oil-proof ammunition should always be used in a pocket weapon.

It is officially approved.—DONEGAN WIGGINS.

Lost Trails

We offer this service free of charge to readers who wish to get in touch with old friends from whom the years have separated them. All inquiries of this sort received by us, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with the inquirer's name. We reserve the right, in case the inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any number or other name, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and in general to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. For the benefit of the friend you seek, give your own name when possible. Give also your own full address. We will forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal Star *to give additional publicity in their "Missing Relative Column" weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred. Full lists of those unfound are reprinted semiannually. Whenever practicable inquiries will be repeated in newspapers in the town in which the person inquired for was last seen.*

CARTER, IOLA. Last heard from July 19, 1926. Left Alvord. Age 19, large blue eyes, blond, bobbed hair, 5 feet tall, weight 180 pounds. Come home at once. Mother's health failing. Any information gladly appreciated by her heart-broken parents. Father—J. E. CARTER, R 4, Box 21, Alvord, Wire Co., Texas.

WILL all who served with the 54th Art. C. A. C. either in the U. S. or in France send their name and address at once to J. L. HUSE, 219 Spring Street, Portland, Maine.

WOULD like to hear from any of the fellows who were in Co. M. 19th Inf., 1918, Galveston, Camp Travis, Texas.—Address P. A. G. care of *Adventure*.

SOMEWHERE in the world I have an elder brother by the name of William B. Spraks. He is around fifty-five years of age. I am twenty-one. We have never met. Would like to locate him. Anybody knowing of a *hombre* by that name please write.—WILLIAM A. COWGER, Biloxi, Miss.

IMLAY, JOHN. Last seen on ranch near Rieth, Oregon—winter of 1925. Had people in Portland. Was at Pendleton roundup in 1925. May be in Salinas or San Francisco, Calif. Write to L. W. RICHARDSON, Dalton, Georgia.

KOHL, BOB (Pop), Fred. Hartnett or any of the boys who worked with me on Shafter Ranch of Kern Co. Land Co., Calif. Address L. W. RICHARDSON, Dalton, Georgia.

HALTON, FRED J. Steamship manager at one time, Sec'y of the Hawaiian Promotion Committee in Honolulu. Please communicate with your wife, or forward some money for the support of wife and children. It is impossible to educate the children as they deserve without help. Wife—MRS. MARY E. HALTON, 5516 Dorchester Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

PINER, JACK. Please get in touch with me immediately about J. Important. Mail will be forwarded if addressed to me care of Box 373, Arkansas City, Kansas. M. D. C.

MACK, William. Last heard of twenty-five years ago, when I was five years old. At that time owned a restaurant in Fresno, Calif. Mother's maiden name, Anna Abelson. Any information whether he is dead or alive will be greatly appreciated by his son.—ALBERT KRANES, 76 Foxall Street, Brooklyn, New York.

ROEMER and ARMSTRONG. Nellie, the child of Bertha Armstrong nee Roemer, and Robert William Armstrong wants to hear from her relatives on both sides.—MRS. R. T. ELLIS, Little Rock, Wash.

NEWTON, OTHIE. Last heard of May 19, 1924—Bear Creek and Douglas, Wyoming. Dark hair and eyes, one glass eye. You are needed by Mr. and Mrs. E. Stimmell, 8220 East Colfax Avenue, Denver, Colo., whom you promised to help when help was needed. Please get in touch with us at once.

HARROLD, ARTHUR. Last heard of in London, England. Your brother Gilbert anxious to hear from you, mother near her end at Nibley.—Address G. H. HARROLD, Deseronto, Ont., Can.

STALKER, WILLIAM MOODIE. Was last heard of in the Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Any information will be greatly appreciated by his sister.—JANE (STALKER) GILLMAN, 8-a Godeus Street, San Francisco, Calif.

COOLEY, CAPT. C. O. Last heard of from Camp Vail, New Jersey. Carl, should "auld acquaintances be forgot?" Write the old friends GEORGE and CLARE WEBSTER, Box 1214, Hibbing, Minn.

SKLENAR, WILLIAM. Last heard of in Roselle, N. J. Age 19. Dark complexion, about 5 feet, 5 in. Would like to settle financial affairs in family. Any information will be greatly appreciated by his brother, Edward. Address, Westbury, L. I.

SHARPE, CECIL. Age 28. 5 ft. 10 in. Hair dark, wears glasses, round shouldered. Last heard of in Kamloops, B. C., Canada, November, 1923. Father inquires.—A. E. S., Heffley Creek, B. C. Canada.

DONLEY, RICHARD PAUL. Left Douglas, Arizona, in October, 1906, with four men (names unknown) to go on horseback into placer mining district of Old Mexico. Please send any information concerning him to sister.—MRS. F. R. CONKEY, Bryan, Ohio.

STADE, HAROLD W. Please write your mother and me and let us know if everything is all right with you or come home. Still at same address. We are all so worried., Mae (Wife).—MRS. M. STADE, 616 Alexanderine, West, Detroit, Michigan.

THE following have been inquired for in either the January 15th, 1927, or the February 15th, 1927, issues of Adventure. They can get the names and addresses of the inquirers from this magazine.

A. D. I.; Anyone with 9th U. S. E., M. T. D., Fort Sam Houston, Texas; Ashley, Ernest William; Baldwin, Alfred; Bohem, Charles; Casey, Dan R.; Cass, Michael; Chalk, Joe; Crosby, Fred; Daddy; Davis, Bryan; Davis, James; Donnelly, Thomas F.; Doyle, John; Dudley, Charles W.; Fanning, Daniel; Fay, Harry; Guttmon, Mrs. Harry (nee Ada Davies); Hall, Alonzo Fischer; Harris, Margaret (nee Reedy); Hohensinner, Frank L.; Holl, Gerald Francis; Johnson, Stanley C.; Jones, John P.; Klohk, Sasha; Kucera, Adolph; Lamson, Willis; LeBlanc (or White) Pierre (Peter); Joseph or Jean (John); Moore or More, Curtis; Old timers of Abilene & Ft. Hays; O'Hara, Terence; Padgett, Jennings A.; Parson, Harry; Polley, James; Riley, John H.; Robinson, J. P. (Scotty); Sanche, Hubert; Sass, Henry; S. D. C. (S. D. Clark); Taune, Albert or Dallis; Wright, Leona.

UNCLAIMED Mail—Gordon, Gail J.; Fleischer, Fred.

Verdicts by Adventure *as to the authoritativeness, reliability and authenticity of fact-material, local color and general soundness of current non-fiction*

BOOKS YOU CAN BELIEVE

Given by Experts having first-hand Knowledge of the Material involved

THIS department offers a unique service. Dealing with only non-fiction books, it passes solely on the reliability of the fact-material contained therein, answering the question "Is this book authoritative, trustworthy and of importance?" Brief judgment is passed by our staff of over one hundred specialists, each an expert in his particular field. Only books dealing with the field of outdoor activities are considered, but that field ranges all the way from fishing to entomology, from travel to anthropology. While reviewing new books as issued, the department will also take up older books that are worth while. (Note that most of our "Ask Adventure" experts have compiled careful bibliographies on their respective fields, sent free to readers if stamped and addressed return envelope is enclosed.)

Books mentioned below may be obtained from the publishers direct or through *Adventure*.

THE HEART OF BLACK PAPUA, by Merlin Moore Taylor, McBride Co. Another of the numerous books about the Territory of Papua that are backed by only a few weeks' residence in the territory. Mr. Taylor accompanied a Papuan magistrate into the Mt. Yule and Amenorofo Districts, and the book is a write up of his experiences during this journey. Pleasantly written, but it cannot be termed authoritative. Papua, like most other countries, takes much longer to absorb than the seven or eight weeks Mr. Taylor spent in gathering the materials he has amplified in this volume. The cannibalistic thrills are—amusing to one who knows this country. The good Fathers of the Sacred Heart Mission walked all over this "black heart, etc.," years before Mr. Taylor wandered there.—L. P. B. ARMIT, Port Moresby, Territory of Papua. 27th Nov., 1926.

HANDBOOK OF TRAVEL. Prepared by the Harvard Travellers Club, The Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. This book was prepared to promote intelligent travel and exploration and appeals to the general traveller as well as those contemplating more serious work with suggestions on the gathering of objects and facts that shall make the casual pleasure trip of permanent and real value. Each of the chapters is prepared by an expert and includes Camping and Camp Equipment, Methods of Transport, Mapping and Route Surveying, Medicine and Records and Observations of Travel, and covers equipment and travel in the north country, mountains, desert and tropics, and afoot, by camel, pack-horses and by water. The chapters on photography, geography, geology, natural history collecting and anthropology give us a popular scientific treatise on phases which are not usually dwelt upon in travel books. We are given definite data on arms and ammunition and hunting dangerous game. Determining position by astronomical observation logarithmic tables, route surveying in open country and notes on traverse surveys in tropical South America with a complete list of tables and a graphic traverse chart is supplied. The chapter on hygiene, medicine and surgery gives all the information needed and particularly the section devoted to tropical hygiene, diseases and treatment is the best offered to the layman by any book published. The book is world wide in scope and a most complete *vade mecum* for any traveller. It contains 544 pages and is pocket size. It is absolutely authentic. It is officially approved and recommended.—CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, M. D.

MISSISSIPPI STEAMBOATIN', by Herbert Quick and Edward Quick. Henry Holt and Co., Publishers. 15 chapters, 339 pages, 17 illustrations, inadequate bibliography, and needs an index. Price $3. Much more than a steamboat book, covers history, statistics, anecdotes, wide variety of sketchy details, river pirates to freight rates, shanty-boats to packets, but somehow seems to neglect the River in favor of relatively picayune humans, good reporting, adequate selection, rather than a *spirited* account. A fine introduction to River Lore; I wonder that the unending, varied, terrific struggle at river control has not a whole chapter, instead of so casual mentions; if I were picking a shanty-boat trip library, this would be one of the twelve or fifteen books I'd want when held by a Norther in a lonesome band.—RAYMOND S. SPEARS.

The Trail *Ahead*

The next issue of ADVENTURE, *April 1st*

Three *Complete Novelettes:*

The Friend of His Youth

By Leonard H. Nason

Prerogatives of rank? *Sheehan* knew all about them. As he was quick to let the other doughboys know—"I'm sergeants around here, I'm telling you!" Enough of a sergeant, his captain believed, to share the responsibilities of his night patrol on the Marne.

The Society of Condors

By Gordon MacCreagh

When *politicos* pervert justice to their own ends honest patriots must work under cover. Who were these brigands who terrorized three countries and hid themselves in the bleak and arid fastnesses of the Chilean Andes?

A Friendship in the Wilderness

By Raymond S. Spears

Into the badlands where man had never gone, into the domain of the great gray wolf, king of the outlaws, wandered a little boy. And Nature dealt with the man-child after her own fashion.

And—*Other Good Stories*

Part Two of Cockades, *coaches, and the rolling of drums,* by Meade Minnigerode; *Part Three of* Smoky Seas, by Clements Ripley, *in which a bargain is struck;* Punishment, by James Mitchell Clarke, *the original Jonah;* The Were-Tiger, by Lyman Bryson, *a stranger comes to Annam;* Hardware, by Edward L. McKenna, *a father and the law*

Adventure is out on the 1st and 15th of the month

Everybody's is changed, too!

NOW it's an all-fiction magazine of stories of adventure and action, with an occasional crime story, mystery or prize-fighting story—in fact, an occasional almost any sort of story, tragic or humorous—thrown in to add yeast to the bread.

Here Are Some Features of the April Issue
(On Sale March 20th)

The Smiling Death
by FRANCIS D. GRIERSON

The first chapters of a new novel of crime and mystery that kept us up all night reading it. It's so engrossing that it seems hardly fair to publish it as a serial.

The Long Rider
by WILLIAM CORCORAN

A complete novelette of the West in which action follows upon action with bewildering rapidity—and yet there's room left for some very nice sentiment.

Del Rio Peaches
by MILLARD WARD

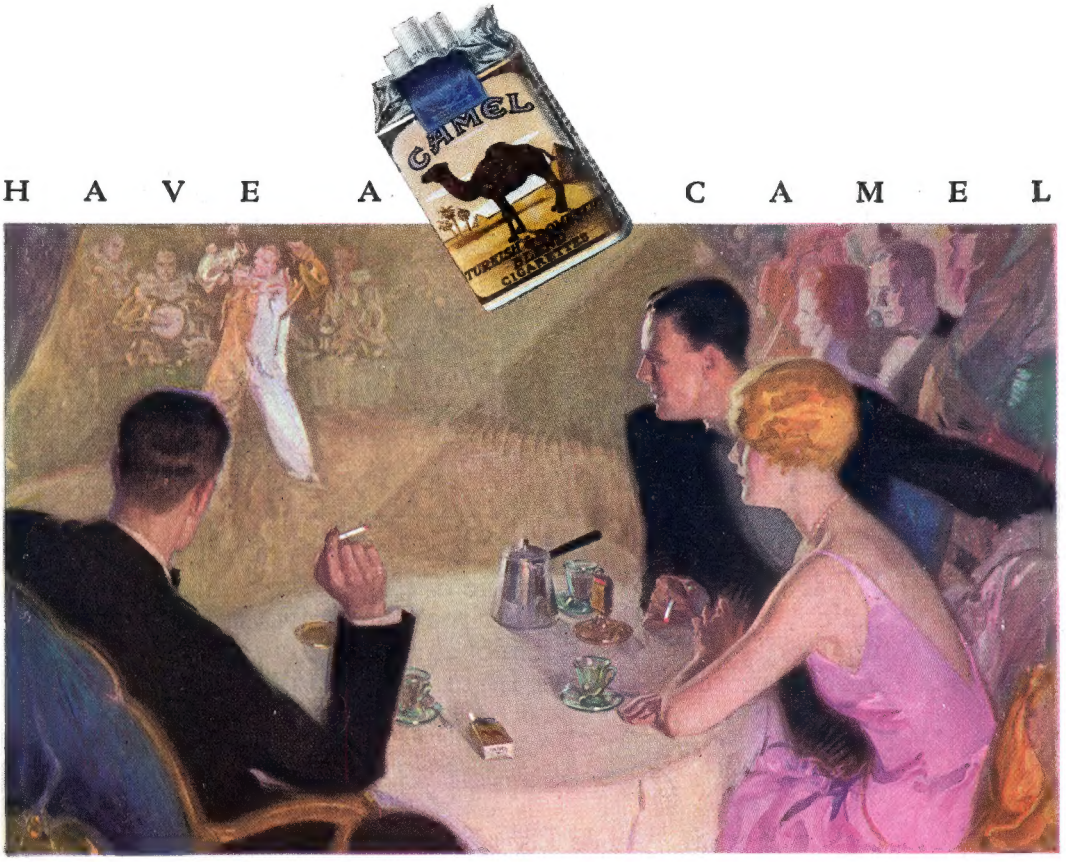
A complete novelette of gun running to a toy revolution in Central America with a hero who's a humorous super-man and a most engaging sort of character.

Also the continuation of Beatrice Grimshaw's novel; the conclusion (alas!) of Captain Dingle's "Flying Kestrel"; and some corking short stories including the most humorous war story we've ever read, "Strong Drink Is Raging," by Blatz Henderson.

Everybody's

Published on the 20th of Each Month and For Sale at all News-stands at 25c a copy

H A V E A C A M E L



Camels add to the joy of living

SMOKING is one of the keen pleasures of life.

The choice of a cigarette deserves your most careful judgment because it determines the degree of enjoyment you will have.

Camels welcome comparison on every count. Compare their goodness in every way. Each successive Camel brings a fresh pleasure no matter how constantly you smoke.

Such mellow mildness can come only from the world's choicest tobaccos, supremely blended, with the sole purpose of giving you, the smoker, a cigarette which you can enjoy to the fullest.

The verdict of the experienced smoker is—

"Have a Camel!"

R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO COMPANY, WINSTON-SALEM, N. C.

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